



**Presents an Unofficial Guide to:
Planescape: Torment**

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Introduction

This is not a complete walkthrough of Planescape: Torment. Short of playing the game several times as different classes, exhaustively going through every dialog path with every possible set of stats, spending months of time to do so, there's no way to do that. This is how I played through the game, step by step. I won't even say it is the best way. I sometimes missed and forgot things and had to come back to them. So do what you want to do, play how you want to play. It's your game.

The conversation paths that I took playing the game are presented here as a narrative and will not necessarily match the choices on screen or the responses word for word and frequently differ in tense. They are also truncated and condensed where I could do so without spoiling the flow of the tale. However in every case where a conversational choice is made I included key phrases so that someone reading along could easily tell which path I followed. There are conversations that took place that I did not include because they offered no new information or experience, or were short and without branches.

Planescape is the most amazing computer role-playing game I've ever had the pleasure of playing. In many respects I feel it is the first CRPG that is really worthy of the name. I found myself thinking about how I felt about people and actions in the course of play, being drawn further into the game and the persona of my character the longer I played.

Planescape became a personal experience to me, as I suspect it has to most of those who have played the game. The characters seem real and players' actions seem real with consequences that make sense. If we are good or bad, choose to side with law or chaos it is because we come to feel that way as we work through the game and not because the designers force us. I've been playing computer games for nearly twenty years and Ps:T is perhaps the finest



game I've ever played of any type. I salute Interplay and Black Isle for their efforts.

Sincerely,
V'Ger

Suggestions for Character Creation and Development

There just aren't enough points to go around, so you'll have to make some tough decisions. If I were starting again I would raise my wisdom to 18 because of the large experience point bonus and the additional dialog options that open up. Nothing else is as clear. Putting your strength at 18 puts a fighter in a good spot for when they get to level 7. It takes 5 points, either through levels or in the creation screen to raise your strength from 18 to 18/00, but if you are a fighter when you first take a character to level 7, your strength will automatically move up to 19 from 18, essentially giving you 5 stat points for free. High strength will also let you bash in locked doors and containers that don't require a specific key.

Putting so many points into strength and wisdom only leaves you 3 points for other stats. I put mine in intelligence and let constitution, dexterity, and charisma fend for themselves, but you might want to choose differently. A high charisma (14+) will let you succeed in certain dialog options, for example. Charisma is the least critical stat at the start because it can be raised once you become a mage by using the Friends spell and there are people and one faction that will boost it further, as well as tattoos available at Fell's Tattoo Parlor. Once I had the money I bought several charisma tattoos and put them on before bartering or talking to someone important. You do need a charisma of 14 or more to get Stale Mary to do something for you in the Dead Nations, which I passed by.

Whatever way appeals to you: fighter, thief or mage you should level up as a fighter first for every level except the 7th and then change to a thief after you reach level 9 as a fighter to reach level 10 as a thief. This will maximize your hit points. Fighters get 1d10 for each level they rise through 9. When they reach level 10 and on they only get an additional 3 while thieves still get 1d6 hit points when they go from level 9 to 10. After level 10 the fighter gets more hit points, but you may want to stick to your preferred class; it all depends on how narrowly you want to focus.

Specialization

Here's the straight dope: You want to reach levels 7 and 12 first as the same class because of the specialization bonuses you get at those levels. At level 7 you get a bonus of +1 to the primary stat for your class. For fighters you also get the option to use 4 proficiency slots for one weapon. Checking into Fell's you'll also find a new tattoo specific to your class boosting your stats and adding additional abilities.

Now here's the catch. If you're a different class when you reach level 12 than you were at level 7 you only get +1 to your primary stat for that class, so if you were a fighter and then a thief you would get +1 to strength at level 7 and +1 to dexterity when you reach level 12 as a thief.

On the other hand, if you hit levels 7 and 12 with the same class the 12 level bonuses are really nice. For a fighter at level 12 you get +1 strength, +1 con, +3 maximum hit points and can now use 5 proficiency slots for one weapon class, not to mention the tattoo at Fell's which gives +3 to armor class, +3 to strength and +9 maximum hit points. This is a big reward. The rewards for the other two classes are equally impressive.

Class Switching

In order to become a mage you need to talk to Mebbeth in Ragpicker's Square. That's also where you'll find Ratbone who can train you as a thief. Once you have seen them and been trained you can switch back and forth from class to class by talking to Dak'kon and Annah. Annah can change you to a thief (or fighter?) and Dak'kon will change you to a fighter or a mage. You can do this at any time, even in combat.

For hit points and specialization the only class that counts is the one you're at when you first reach that level. If you are a fighter the first time you reach level 6 you get the usual 1d10 hit points. If you were a 6th level thief first, then you'd only get 1 hit point when you reached level 6 as a fighter.

My feeling is that the best path is to go to each level from 1-9 as a fighter, then get to 10 as a thief, and then go back to fighter for level 12. That gives you the maximum number of hit points and I found that having the extra proficiency slots and fighting abilities of a fighter made for a very powerful character. My other choice would be to hit 7 and 12 first as a mage. You can't be a weapon master (5 proficiency slots used for one weapon), but the tattoos for a mage really let you load up on first and second level spells. But that doesn't mean those are the only right choices. Do what you will enjoy and if it isn't the "optimum" solution, so what? We're doing this to entertain ourselves.

Save before talking to any named character. You can fall into a conversational trap and close off other branches or completely alienate another character, turning them hostile.

Walkthrough

[Note: throughout the walkthrough, I've noted experience and character point gains in parentheses. (250) means a gain of 250 points.]

[This walkthrough does not include conversations with generic characters such as dabus, villagers, collectors and so forth. They may give you information, but as a rule it's nothing you won't find out in more detail from the named characters.]

[Be sure to read your journal. There's a lot of information in there, some of which you might not have caught when you were talking to people. The notes help flesh out the quests and give more detail on what you've done and need to do. And, of course, the quest section can keep you on track.]

Prelude

OK, self. Here we go again. If you're reading this, things are even more screwed up than they were last time so keep your wits about you and your head attached. It's going to be a bumpy ride. One thing, this guy, I should say skull, Morte. It's OK to trust him. He yaps a lot, but he knows useful things and you'll need him to keep you on track, since you keep forgetting stuff when you die.

When you can't figure out what to do next and even reading this doesn't help, try talking to Morte. He usually knows what's up and needs doing.

So, the rest is in my own, our own words. There are other things you could do and you don't have to do everything like I, we did it last time, but something in here should give you a nudge in the right direction if you die one time too many.

The Mortuary

Wow. What a headache. I don't remember the last time my head hurt this much. Come to think of it, I don't seem to remember much of anything. Why am I on this slab with tubes running into me? Oh, my head...

At least I've got company. Loud company. Doesn't Morte ever shut up? I got him to read the tattoo on my back. Not much help. Just a name, Pharod. Have to find him and hope he has my journal. Got to find the key Morte mentioned.

After examining my surroundings I searched the shelves and machines around me for anything useful. There wasn't much. I don't guess they expect the corpses around here to have a lot of time on their hands.

These zombies are sure a talkative bunch. One of them did have the key on him. Had to kill him to get it. Kill? He's dead. From the look of me, I'm dead, which may be an insult to dead people.

I unlocked the door to the north and went into the next room. Morte warned me not to make too much noise. Killing them might bring the attention of the caretakers. I asked who the caretakers were. He said they're called Dustmen and doesn't regard them highly.

I asked why they would care if I escape. He said they believe everybody's got to die and sooner is better. I asked where all these corpses came from. He said that these poor sods sold their bodies to the caretakers.

Since Morte had mentioned that he specifically didn't want me to dispose of any female corpses I asked why. He asked if I was serious. He said they were the last chance for folks like us. I asked what he was talking about. He said they're dead ... we're dead.

I still didn't see, or didn't want to see, his point. He said that we already had an opening line with these limping ladies. We had our death in common. I pointed out that he'd said I wasn't dead and he said well, OK, but he was.

Then he said that since I still had some cobwebs in the attic I should ask him questions if I had any as we went along and to start writing stuff down, so I don't forget. Hence the journal you're reading now.

[Talk to every zombie and choose search the corpse. Planescape is different from most CRPGs. There are no generic NPCs. Each skeleton, zombie, townspeople and so on has their own description and may offer interesting dialog choices.]

As you walk through the planes, move your mouse all over the screen wherever you see a container, object, or structure and look for the cursor to change to a question mark or the hand. There are a number of things in the game that are in dark or offbeat places. One example is the Poison Charm that Quint wants. I missed it the first time through the Buried village. Even when I knew exactly where to look it still took several minutes of hunting with the mouse to find it.

Throughout the game it is almost always a better idea to talk first and ask questions later. You can kill all the zombies, but you'll miss out on important clues and items.

There are no actions in this game that do not have consequences. Killing innocent people, whether they're dead or not, will gradually move your alignment towards evil. Making vows and breaking them moves you towards chaotic and so on.

Alignment is slow to change. It takes many acts to move your alignment in a particular direction, though actions are weighted so some actions provide more momentum than others.

Play the way you want to play and Planescape will support it. Unless you kill everyone you meet without talking to them you can play the game through. Even then you might be able to complete it, but don't take that as a guarantee. This is the most flexible CRPG I've encountered and I've been playing them a long time.]

Morte is incredible. He's been dead for I don't know how long, he's only a skull and he still wants some action with the female zombies here. I admire his determination, if not his common sense.

The second shelf on the left side of this second room had the Mortuary logbook. Wouldn't you know it; the page where my information should be is gone.

Dhall

In the next room I saw a huge tome, taller than me, on a stand. Reading the tome was a sickly looking person in a chair that was floating in midair. As I started to speak with him Morte stopped me. He suggested that we not chat with Dusties, especially sick ones. I started to reply, but the Dustman's eyes turned to me. He said the weight of years hangs heavy on me, Restless One, but he does not count deafness among his ailments.

I asked if he knew me. He said he had never known me anymore than I have known myself, for I had forgotten. I asked who he was. He said I asked the wrong question as always, but that his name was Dhall.

I asked him what this place was. He said that I was in the Mortuary. I asked for more details. He said the dead are brought here to be interred or cremated. It is their responsibility to care for the dead, those who have left this shadow of life and walk the path to True Death. He said this was almost my home.

I asked about the Shadow of Life. He said that this life is not real. This is the life after we die and we remain here until we can achieve the True Death.

I asked of True Death. He said True Death was non-existence. Devoid of reason, sensation, passion. A state of purity. I said that sounded dull. Why would anyone want it? He asked if it were worse than remaining in the shadow of what life once was.

I asked how I got here. He said that I came on a cart with a retinue of other corpses. I asked about the cart. He told me I lay in the middle of a mountain of corpses. My "seneschal" Pharod was happy to accept a few coppers to dump the lot of us at the gate.

I asked who Pharod was. He said he was a collector of the dead. He said Pharod and people like him scavenge the bodies and bring them to the Dustmen. I asked where I could find him. He said that if events follow their usual path it was more likely that Pharod would find me and take me back here.

I said perhaps, but I must find him. He said I should not seek out Pharod. He was certain I'd just end up back here. I said I had to find him. He finally said that Pharod could be found somewhere outside the Mortuary, in the Hive.

I suggested that he did not like Pharod much. He said he respects some, but Pharod isn't one of them. He takes liberties with the possessions of the dead. He is like a Knight of the Post. I asked what he meant. He said a Knight of the

Post was a thief. I asked if Pharod took anything from me. He said it was likely. He said my journal was likely in Pharod's hands.

I asked him more about the Mortuary. I asked about the Dustmen. He said they were a faction that recognizes the illusion this life represents. I asked why the Dustmen would want me dead. He said that there are souls who can never attain the True Death. He said souls like this, like me, are unacceptable to the Dustmen.

I said that didn't sound very good. He said that my existence is blasphemy to them. Many of the Dustmen would order me cremated if they knew. I pointed out that he seemed to have a different opinion. He said he did not think forcing their beliefs on me was just; that I must give up life on my own and that as long as he was at his post he would protect my right to search for my own truth.

I asked what his post was. He said he was a scribe who catalogs all the shells that come to the Mortuary. Asking more about the Mortuary I asked what Sigil was. He said it was our city.

I asked about my wounds. He said the wounds on my body looked as if they would have sent more men to the True Death, yet many of them looked healed, but that those were only the surface wounds.

I asked what he meant. He spoke of the wounds of the mind. That those wounds may run deeper than the scars on my skin.

He had frequent bouts of coughing all through our conversation and I finally asked him if he was well. He said he was near the True Death, that it would not be long before he passed the Eternal Boundary.

I asked about the Eternal Boundary. He said it was the boundary between the shadow of life and the True Death.

I asked if I could help. He said he did not wish to live forever or again. So I bid him farewell.

As I left he said that he did not envy me. With my headache I agreed with him.

Zombie 1201 had a note stuck in its mouth. I tried to pull it out, and then used the scalpel to cut the stitches. After examining the note further I saw that it could be folded. Remembering that the note said his contract was the key I folded the upper right corner, then the lower left, upper left and finally the upper right again. I opened the sides of the paper pyramid. **(250)** How about that, an earring.

In the next room, Zombie 1664 was carrying a huge stack of books. I examined them and found a page; it must be the missing page from the logbook.

The second shelf on the left in this room had some bandages.

In the next room was zombie 506. He was covered in stitches. Perhaps he was a stand-up comic. I examined the stitches, and then used my scalpel to cut the thread. **(100)** Well, what have we here? This zombie is really number 78.

Zombie 985 wasn't doing to well. (As if any of us are?) He had some sort of rot working its way through his knee. I tried to help him, but unfortunately I made things worse. He fell over. As rough as this place was I took his arm as a crude club.

Ei-Vene

In the middle of the room was an odd looking young woman. I tried to strike up a conversation, but she was completely intent on what she was doing. I asked Morte what was wrong with her hands. He said she was a tiefling: part fiend, part human, and that they are usually a bit addled.

I finally tapped her on the shoulder and was struck by her eyes as she turned to look at me. They were a sickly yellow with orange dots for pupils. I said greetings again, and she told me to find thread and embalming fluid.

Vaxis

Moving into the next room I met Zombie 821. I asked if he'd seen anything interesting and what do you know, he answered me. I pointed out that he wasn't a zombie, then asked who he was. He became agitated and wanted to know who I was and what I wanted.

I said I was looking for a way out. He asked if I was spying on the Dusties. I said no, that I was trying to escape. He asked if I was in trouble. I told him that I woke up on one of the slabs. He asked if I was barmee and I told him that I knew it was hard to believe, but it was true. He said I must be barmee and that I should leave.

I said he should tell me what he was doing or I would call the guards. He said that I couldn't do that because he had friends and I had none. He'd escape. I'd be dead.

I said that he wouldn't escape if I killed him. That got him. He said he'd talk and tell me what he saw as a spy. I asked whom he was spying for. He fell silent. I asked again who and Morte broke in. He said that the berk must be an Anarchist. I asked what an Anarchist was. Morte said that they try to tear down anything order or control. I said I thought that order could use a good tearing-

down. I asked if he was watching the place for the Anarchists. He clammed up and looked around fearfully.

[There are many places in the game where you will have to take a position like this one where you decide how you feel about the Anarchists. Whatever you choose will move you toward one alignment or another. In this case, answering as I did moves me towards chaotic. Choose what you feel is true to you and the character you're playing.]

I said never mind then and asked what he'd seen the Dustmen do. He said nothing. They don't do anything. I asked if he knew Pharod. He said he'd heard Pharod lives in the Hive somewhere. He said the Dusties didn't like him. I asked why the Dusties didn't like him. Vaxis spoke with difficulty because of the disguise and I didn't understand his answer. When I asked him to repeat it Morte stepped in and explained. He said that Pharod brings too many deaders and it has made the Dusties suspicious that Pharod is killing people.

I asked him how I could escape. Vaxis said I could escape through the portals. I asked what portals. He said they're everywhere. I asked if he could show me. He asked why he should help me. I said because I need help. He said everybody needs something, but nobody wants to give.

I asked what he needed. He said he needed a key from the embalmer's room. I asked where it was. He said a Dustie matching Ei-Vene's description had it. I said I knew her and would be back in a bit with the key. I said I'd be back shortly. He said that if I was caught don't say anything about him or he'd gut me in my sleep. I told him I'd get the key, but he'd better watch his threats.

Two of the embalming machines in the next room had fluid still in them. In this room were a locked gate and stairs going up. Before going up the stairs I took

the fluid and needle I'd found back to Ei-Vene. I also bashed open a desk and found an earring.

Seeing Ei-Vene once more, I studied her hands. As I did so a strange prickling sensation ran up my scalp and my vision blurred. Then I was someplace else. Sometime else. I saw a freshly slain corpse with the number 42 stitched into its scalp. It is lying on a slab and I have just finished stitching up its chest. I put something inside, something that might help if I met the fellow again. **(250)** In the vision I tell him to keep this safe until I return.

Coming back to the present I tapped Ei-Vene on her shoulder. She looked at me and frowned, saying dumb zombies. She told me to find the thread and fluid. I gave her the items. I waited as she worked. Her hands were most adept.

When she was finished with the corpse on the table she turned to me and ran her talons along my arms and chest. I continued to play my undead role. Morte asked if we needed some time alone together. I remained passive as she closely examined my scars and tattoos. She said that one of my scars was in bad shape.

I waited quietly. Her talons hooked into the thread I had brought her and moved to stitch me up. I let her complete her work. At the end I felt healthier. **(+1 permanent max hit point.)**

When she was done she waved me away, but I asked if she had an embalming key. **(250)** She leaned forward, sniffed at me and then gave me the key, telling me to bring it back when I was done.

I went back to Vaxis and gave him the key. **(250)** Then I asked him how I get out of here. He gave me directions on where to find one on the first floor of the Mortuary and told me I needed a crooked finger bone.

(250) I asked where I'd find the finger bone. He suggested I look in the storage room on the upper floor. I repeated his instructions back to him and bid farewell.

I went up the stairs to the third floor of the Mortuary. On the right one of the shelves in the stairwell held a Charcoal Charm.

Walking south, I entered a very large circular room. On the right, at a workbench I found a needle and thread.

I saw a Dustman by a corpse. I went to speak with him. He asked if I was lost. I said no, and that I had some questions for him. He asked what my business was. I said that I was here to see someone. I said I was here to see Adahn. He said I should check with one of the guards at the front gate.

[If you tip your hand to the Dustman, but have high dexterity, you can snap his neck before he can give the alarm, earning 250 experience. You can then put on his robe and move about without worry. You can also get Vaxis to disguise you as a zombie by taking him another set of embalming fluid, needle and thread, but I would only recommend doing so for the experience. It is excruciating moving so slowly as a zombie.]

[There are several zombies on this floor that you can disassemble for parts and weapons. I did not find the parts useful and the weapons have no value and are not as good as what you find elsewhere. You get no experience for doing this and my gut feeling is it moves your alignment towards chaos and/or evil.]

Walking to the north I saw a skeleton with the number 42 chiseled into it. I thought it was the corpse I had the memory about. As soon as I spoke, the skeleton straightened and crossed its arms. I did the same. Then the skeleton dropped its arms to its sides. The leather cords securing the skeleton's torso snapped and the ribcage unfolded.

Reaching in I saw my hand vanish and had the impression that my hand had gone somewhere else. Then I felt it bump into an object. I took it out and saw nothing remarkable, just a lump of iron. I don't guess this was one of my brighter incarnations...

I examined the object. **(250)** As I touched it, it began hissing as the metal evaporated, leaving behind a strange dagger, some coins and two Clot Charms.

As I explored this floor several Dusties accosted me. When they asked I always said the same thing: that I wasn't lost and was looking for someone named Adahn. That seemed to satisfy them.

On a table in the far northeast of the room I found another needle and thread.

I found the Mortuary key in the southwest. It was in a set of shelves by the western stairway.

In the southern storage room I found Zombie 79. He was decapitated at some point and someone made a hash of sowing his head back on again. Looking closer I saw that he had lost his head several times as a variety of stitching and threads had been used. The number he bore had been circumscribed inside of a fanged circle that appeared to be branded on his forehead. I examined the fanged circle. One of the recesses looked like it matched the grooves on the copper earring I had.

Leaving the zombie, I examined the earring again and inserted my fingernail into the notch matching where the triangle was pointing in the fanged circle. **(250)** The earring clicked and the top opened. I thought it didn't look half bad on my ear.

I moved on, riffling the cabinets in the room. My strength was enough to bash open the more reluctant ones. I found 2 Clot Charms, the Dustman's Request, almost two-score coppers and a pry bar.

[To attempt to bash open any locked container or door attack it.]

In the northern storage room I found a Mortuary Task List, some bandages, a Lesser Dustman Embalming Charm, 3 Clot Charms, a Corpse Fly Charm, Bone Charm and 30-some coppers.

In the shelves near the western staircase I found a hammer. I then went back to the second level of the Mortuary.

On the way to the first floor of the Mortuary I saw Dhall again. I told him about Vaxis. **(250)**

Mortuary First Floor

As we entered the room I saw zombie 732; he was carrying a large tomb. I "borrowed" it from him. He didn't seem to mind.

Walking into the central chamber of this floor I saw a huge skeleton, much larger than any I had seen before. I examined the big fellow carefully. He had iron bolts securing his joints and the heavy armor he wore.

I examined his armor. The armor was covered in symbols. Though they appeared engraved, the symbols wavered in the light making it difficult to focus on them. I wasn't able to decipher them, but decided to compare them to the Book of Tome and Ash I had borrowed from the zombie.

I consulted the Book. From what I could make out the armor enchantment only applied to the breastplate, while the warding enchantment was what made the skeleton aware of its surroundings.

Thinking carefully I marred the warding enchantment first, followed by the necromantic and finally the armoring enchantment. **(800)** With a calamitous sound the skeleton collapsed. While waiting for the wakened dead I sifted through the remains and found piece of armor with the runes intact. I added it to my pack.

[If you like you can try to kill the skeletons. You get 650 experience for each one you kill, but at this stage of the game you aren't strong enough and will only die a lot.]

On the northeast wall of this room I found a crescent hatchet that still looked worthy among many rusty weapons.

In a room to the right was a Dustman who accosted me. I told him I wasn't lost, but was looking for someone. I told him I was looking for Adahn.

[Yes, there is a reason I keep telling people about Adahn.]

As I was walking through the rooms north of the central chamber I heard a noise. I turned to see a swirl of blue smoke and sparks. I thought that this must be the portal I had been told of by Vaxis.

[You can go through the portal to a tomb. Inside the tomb on the floor are 50 coppers and a note to Vaxis. To the west was an exit leading to the Hive. Once you enter this tomb you cannot go back to the Mortuary unless you can talk your way past the guard at the main entrance.]

Deionarra

Moving to the next room I saw a beautiful ghostly form in front of a large sarcophagus. I moved closer and she stirred; her eyes flickered. As she saw me her face changed into a snarl. "You! What is it that brings you here? Have you come to see first-hand the misery you have wrought? Perhaps in death I still hold some shred of use for you?"

It's so nice to be remembered. I asked who she was. She asked if there was even a shadow of remembrance of her. I said that no, my memories were lost to me. She said it was as she feared; she was truly lost to me.

I said that I did not know her, that my memories are no more. I asked what she knew of me. She said that I was blessed and cursed and that I was never far from her thoughts or heart.

I asked what she meant by blessed and cursed. She said the nature of my curse should be apparent, that death rejects me. Had I not paused and wondered why?

I asked why it would be a curse if death rejected me. She said that she did not doubt my ability to rise from the dead. She thought that every incarnation weakened my thoughts and perhaps one day I will no longer know that I cannot die.

I asked how long this had been going on. She said she did not know.

I asked her where I was. She said I was here with her as in the times when life was something both of us shared. Now the Eternal Boundary separated us. I asked what the Eternal Boundary was. She said it was a barrier she feared I would never cross. It is the barrier between her life and mine.

I said that I needed to escape this place, but that disturbed her so I apologized and said that I did not mean to offend her. She bade me hold for a moment. She said her sight was clear while mine flickered in the darkness. I asked what it was that her eyes saw that mine did not.

She said that she saw me as I was now and also as I might be. I asked what did she see. She said she saw what lay ahead and asked if she should speak of it. I asked her to tell me.

She said she required a promise. That I must promise to return. That I will find some way to save her or join her. I vowed that I would find some way to save her. She said that this was what her eyes saw ...

She said that I would meet three enemies: one of good, one of evil and one of neutrality that had been given life and twisted by the planes. That I would come to a prison built of regrets and sorrow where the shadows themselves have gone mad. I will be asked to make a terrible sacrifice. For the matter to be laid to rest I must destroy that which keeps me alive and be immortal no longer.

I asked why I should destroy what keeps me alive. She said that she knew I must die while I still can to travel beyond into the lands of the dead. I said what did she mean by die why I still can. She said I had died countless deaths and that it must stop.

Again I asked her who she was. She asked how it was that the thieves of memory still kept her name from my memory. She said that the name Deionarra must evoke some memory within me.

I said that I thought I felt the stirrings of memory, that perhaps her words would chase the shadows from my mind. She asked how she could help. I asked if she knew who I was. She said I was both blessed and cursed. I asked what she meant. She said the nature of my curse should be apparent. Did I not wonder why my memories have fled?

I said I was still trying to get my bearings and asked what else she could tell me of myself. She said that I once claimed that I loved her and would do so until death claimed us both. She believed me not knowing who or what I was.

I asked what I was. She froze for a moment and then said that the truth is this: I am one who dies many deaths. These deaths have given the knowing of all things mortal and in my hand lies the spark of life and death. Those that die near me carry a trace of themselves that I can bring forth.

As she spoke a crawling sensation flowed up the back of my skull and I had a compulsion to look at my hand. As I did so I saw the blood coursing sluggishly through my arm, pouring into my muscles ... **(1000)**

[You can now raise fellow party members from the dead.]

I knew Deionarra was right. I remembered how to coax the dimmest spark of life from a body. No doubt this will come in handy at parties.

[This is the first major point at which having a high wisdom will make a difference in what conversational options you have. My character originally had a wisdom of 12 and an intelligence of 9 so I did not get the conversational option described

below. Having realized my mistake I used a character editor to rearrange my stats, taking the nine points I had plowed into constitution and putting them into intelligence (raised it to 12) and wisdom (raising it to 18).]

Returning to Deionarra I started to tell her that I needed to escape, but something stopped me. Instead I told Deionarra that I was in danger and asked her to guide me to a place of safety. I said that I would return as soon as I could to speak to her again.

That seemed to reach her. She said that of course she would help me. She closed her eyes for a moment and something from the ethereal plane passed through her. When her eyes opened she said that perhaps there was a way. **(500)** I said yes, go on. She said that she sensed that there were many doors here kept from mortal eyes. Perhaps I could use one of these.

I asked about these portals. She told me of their nature and said that if I could find the proper key ... I asked what key? She said portals would show themselves if I had the proper item.

[Making vows and keeping them (or not) have a strong affect on your alignment. Keeping them moves you towards lawful, breaking them sends you towards chaotic.]

Soego

Near the Mortuary gate I met Soego. He asked if I was lost. I said no. Then, for some reason I told him I woke up on one of the slabs in the preparation room. He was surprised and asked if he had heard correctly. I said yes. I knew it was hard to believe, but it was the truth. He said that I did look like I had been prepared, but he didn't know how I would have survived such pain.

I asked how I would have gotten here. He said that obviously a mistake has been made. Either relatives, Dustmen or Collectors, brought me in.

I asked about the Collectors. He spoke of them contemptuously and said that they bring the bodies of the dead to the Mortuary. He said that because of their greed they wouldn't have checked to see if I was still living before delivering me.

I said that there had been a mistake and I would like to leave. Now. **(900)**

I had a few questions before I went. I asked if he was all right, because he looked tired. He said it was nothing, a minor fever. I asked if there was anything I could do, but he said no and thanked me for my concern.

I asked if he knew someone named Pharod. He said of course. He said Pharod had no respect for the living and even less for the dead. I asked where I could find him. Soego said that Pharod lives in the Hive, the slums outside the Mortuary, but he did not know exactly where. He suggested that I talk to the other Collectors.

I asked if he knew anything about my journal. He said no, he hadn't seen one.

NE Hive

[You can return to the Mortuary by going to a guard and saying that you want to pay your respects to Deionarra.]

Near an odd looking monument a harlot was plying her wares. I stopped to chat. She thought I looked like someone who had lost something. I said not today. She said to come back when I got tired of losing things. I said I would keep it in mind and took my leave.

Morte asked if I could spare some jink. I said I wasn't even going to ask how he intended to accomplish this. The harlot said it was twice the price for the mirmir. I said he shouldn't worry, from the looks of her I was probably saving him from dying twice.

She suggested that I smelled and dressed like a goatherd, only twice as ugly. Going further she expressed the opinion that a number of unpleasant, unsightly and very probably physically impossible calamities befall me. All the while Morte stared at her in rapt attention. At the end of the verbal avalanche Morte seemed most impressed. He said he now had a few more taunts for his arsenal and he was also in love.

After we came back I offered her ten commons for information. I asked her about the city and places of interest and she told what she knew, but when I asked about Pharod she insisted on more money. She wanted 30 coppers to tell what she knew.

I paid her price and she asked what I wanted to know about him. I said for that price anything she knew. She said the chant was he's a Collector boos and has a whole bunch of bloods in his shadow. I asked where I could find him. **(250)** She said no one knows for sure, but I might start in Ragpicker's Square.

I asked about Ragpicker's Square. She said it was heap of rags and trash three blocks due west of the Mortuary. All the Collectors make their kip there.

Annah

[Yes, this is the Annah who is supposed to join you. And no, you cannot get her to join you just yet no matter what conversational path you take. She doesn't join until much, much later after you find Pharod and fulfill a quest from him.]

On the opposite side of the monument I met Annah, a tiefling with a chip on her shoulder a mile long. I asked who she was and she told me to pike off. After trying to no avail to have a conversation with her I left. Then I came back a moment later. I asked if she knew she had a tail. She said I should pike off. I said I was only curious.

Morte said it was a good thing neither she nor her tail was for sale, that she couldn't squeak out a living with them. That got a rise of her and she wanted Morte to repeat it. I told her that he said she couldn't make a living selling herself and that I disagreed.

She said I was playing stern hardhead, friendly hardhead and should pike off. I said I still had some questions. I asked where I was. She said I was about to find trouble.

I said I was looking for someone named Pharod. She said she might if I sweetened the conversation with jink. I asked how much. I offered 20. She said I should look for him in the Alley south and west of the Mortuary.

I asked if she had seen my journal. She said no, so I left.

Going south I found the entrance to a tomb and went in. *[This is the same tomb that you can get to via the portal from the Mortuary.]* It was an ornate tomb and appeared to have no other entrances or exists. I found 30 coppers and a note from Penn to Vaxis.

Angyar and his wife

Going further south I entered the house of Angyar.

When I said hello he asked what my business was in his house, then told me to get before he sent me back to whatever grave I crawled out of. I'm such a people person. I tried to calm him, but he would not back down.

Instead I went over to talk to his wife. She said I should leave before she called her husband. I said that if she were going to call him she would have already. She said she didn't have the time and not to trouble her.

I asked if she was all right. She said that she was, but that her husband had not been himself. I said that I'd spoken with him and that he seemed troubled. She said that he'd been out of sorts lately, a touch of the cough maybe.

I asked what was really wrong with him. She said she thought he'd done something he regrets. She thought he signed one of the Dead Contracts. I asked what those were. She said that the Dustmen have contracts that give them the right to someone's body after they die.

I asked what they did with the body. She said that they animate it with their black magicks, turn it into one of the walking dead and make it work until it rots away.

I asked why her husband would do such a thing. She said that he might have been eager to make more money. I asked if the contract could be undone. She said that she'd tried, but all she got from the Dustman who bought the contract was a lecture.

I told her to let me see what I could do and asked who the Dustman was who'd sold her the contract. She said he called himself Gravesend and that he stayed at a table at the Dustman bar in the Hive, the Gathering Dust.

I asked where the bar was. She said it was south and west from their house. She said there was a walking corpse out front. I said I would see what I could do. She said that she would not turn away such a friendly gesture, but she asked that I not let on to her husband that she had asked me to do this. I vowed that her husband would not find out and she thanked me.

Ingress

[I've given the approximate location on all the NPC's where I first met them. In many instances you may not find them there since a great number of the NPCs roam around.]

In the north-central area of this quarter of the Hive I met Ingress. She immediately asked if I wanted her to leave and said that she couldn't, that it was a prison to everywhere.

I asked what she meant. She said there were planes, Worlds of all sorts and terrible shadows. I asked where these places were. Gesturing at the city she said they were all here. Doors, doors to everywhere.

When I asked about doors she said I should know this. That every space I walk through or touch that is bounded on all sides could be a door.

I told her to go on. She said that every door has a key and with the key they show their true nature—all eager to take you someplace else and sometimes what's on the other side takes a part of you as a tithe.

I asked what these keys were. She said they could be anything, an emotion, an iron nail held between your second and fifth fingers, a thought thought three times then once in reverse or a glass rose.

I said and all these are keys that open doors. She said yes. I asked how she got here. She said she came from a place else from here almost a life ago, hummed a tune by a glade with two dead trees that had fallen together. A door opened in the space between the trees and showed her this city on the other side. She stepped through and ended here.

I asked why she couldn't go back. She said she'd tried, but all doors here led to other places. She'd been through thrice-ten portals; some on purpose, some not, but none of them were right.

I said there must be a portal that would take her back. She said she couldn't even leave this square. I asked why she couldn't go anywhere. She said anything could be a door. She could be sent someplace worse if she unwittingly had the key on her.

I asked did she mean that she was afraid to go through *any* door or arch because it might be a portal? She nodded yes. I asked how long the fear had gripped her. She said since the last time she walked through a portal and lost her hand. Since her tenth Turning. She said she was in her fourth tenth Turning now.

Incredulous, I said do you mean that you haven't been through any door for thirty years? She only looked at me. I said that if she got here there must be a portal that can take her back. She said it only takes one portal to drive the fear into you. She'd stepped through thrice ten, lost her hand, burned her flesh and lost her sense.

I said I was sorry and that if I could find some way to help her I would. I took my leave.

Sev'Tai

I entered the Dustman Monument and saw Sev'Tai staring at the many names carved there. She told me to stand back and asked what I wanted of her.

I asked what the matter was. She said those chaos-men wrecked her cart, attacked her and killed three of her sisters who tried to stop them. Now her sisters were only names on the walls here. I asked who the Chaosmen were. She said they claim to be a faction, but are just an addled bunch that runs wild through the Hive doing whatever they please.

I asked who the Chaosmen were that attacked her. She said they were a Hive gang called the Starved Dogs Barking or some such. I said that I wouldn't mind putting them in the dead book for some coin. She offered me a copper earring. I said I'd see to it and asked if she could tell me where to find them. She said I should go out the south gate then walk around the block until I come to a place where men run in circles howling at the sky. I said farewell.

Death-of-Names

In the same area was Death-of-Names, a Dustman. When I walked up to him he immediately asked my name. I said that I didn't know. He said that he couldn't help me without a name. I needed a name if I wanted to see where it died.

I asked what he meant. He said you're given a name when your born, and you give it back when you need it no more. Tell me a name, I'll show you its grave.

I told him Deionarra. He pointed at a section of wall and said buried. I examined the spot he indicated. In tiny cramped writing was her name, nearly lost in the sea of names around it.

I tried another, Adahn. He said he was not dead yet, not buried here, not time. He said the same for Dhall.

I asked him to bury a name, but he could not or would not bury any of the names I gave him.

Quentin

I found Quentin staring at the monument. I asked him what this monument was. He told me it is a tombstone for the planes. I asked what that meant. He said that the Dusties scratch the names of the dead on this monument.

I asked what he was doing here. He said he was reading the new arrivals. He tries to find a new one every day and see if he remembers them. I asked if they record everyone who dies. He said that they do, but he didn't know why since the Dusties have more care for the living.

I was puzzled and asked why he said they cared more for the living. He said that the Dustmen mourners that come here aren't mourning the dead; they're mourning the living. I asked why they mourn for the living. He said that I had him there.

I asked if anyone had ever come back after his or her name was put on the monument. He said not a one.

I also asked about Death-of-Names. He said Death-of-Sense wasn't the sanest bird. I asked what he did here. Quentin told me Death was the keeper of the memorial area and knows where all the names are around here.

As I left I passed four Dustmen who were chanting. Turning to one of them I told her that I mourned for one dead. She asked if I felt pain over the one that has

died. I said that yes, this recent death had brought me a great deal of anguish. She said that they would mourn my pain, if I wished. I said that it would ease my pain greatly.

Going to another one I said that I was there for one who has lost another. He asked if the one I spoke of felt anguish of the loss. I lied and told them that my friend Adahn just lost someone close to him. He said they would mourn his pain if Adahn would not take offense. I said that if they could it would ease his pain.

Elderly Hive Dweller

I had seen this old woman pass through the monument several times and thought to speak to her. She said that she didn't see well and then asked if she knew me. I said that perhaps she did, but that I did not know her. She thought about my answer for a moment and then asked what I wanted.

I said that I had some questions. Her expression curdled and she said I was an adventurer. Name, job and all that. She wouldn't have any of it, so off with me. I said no, I not, really. She said she had seen the Dustmen put her husband, her son and both her daughters on the Memorial, adventurers, all of them. She'd even swung a sword herself back in the day so she knew one when she saw one. She continued her tirade, saying she bet I had all sorts of barmee questions. In the end I left, none the wiser.

Baen the Sender

I saw Baen walking south of the Dustman Monument. As I walked towards him he saw me and called out "Craddock ... good sir?"

I asked what did he say. He apologized and said he was called Baen the Sender, one of the many runners in the employ of the House of Senders.

I said no apology was necessary and asked what he wanted. He said that he was looking for Craddock, an overseer in the Hive. He asked if I had heard of him. I said I was sorry, that I hadn't.

He said that he was bound to deliver a message to him and had not been able to find the man. I suggested that I could help him and pass along Baen's message if I came across Craddock. Baen was very happy to hear this and said I would be paid for my troubles.

I asked what the message was. He said that the shipment must be in Curst by the third day or there will be a penalty. He also said that Craddock would know of the shipment the message pertains to. I said that if I saw Craddock I would pass along the message and asked for any details that might help me find him.

Baen gave me a good description and said that Craddock was an overseer in one of the Hive marketplaces, but that was all Baen knew. I said that was good enough for me. Baen thanked me again and asked if I found Craddock to return and tell him of it and I would be rewarded. I said very well and left.

SE Hive

Damsel in Distress

Going in search of Craddock, I went to the southeast quarter of the Hive. There, north of The Smoldering Corpse Bar I saw a woman who appeared to have been assaulted. She ran up and grabbed my arm. She asked me for help and said that they were killing her sister.

I asked who was bothering her. She said that some drunk had followed them from one of the taverns. I told her to wait. I pointed out that she had first said they were killing her sister and now they're killing her. I asked which it was.

She claimed she was distraught and had made a mistake. As she told me this she glanced at the blood on her dress. I examined the stain. I saw that while the blood looked real it was also obviously hours old. I pointed this out to her and asked what she was up to.

She nervously told me that I must be mistaken. Truthfully I said that if she didn't tell me what was going on I'd kill her. (500) She looked into my eyes and then saw my scars. She said she was supposed to lure people into an alley nearby to be robbed.

I gave her some advice. I told her not to pick someone like me as her mark, but some drunken fop instead. She nodded. I told her to make sure he looks like he has more than a couple of coins to his name. She thanked me and left.

Mourns-for-Trees

In the same area I saw a sad looking old man staring at a dead tree. I said hello. Mourns-for-Trees greeted me and asked how this day found me. I asked if that mattered. That seemed to catch him off-guard, but then he said that yes, it does. It mattered to him, at least, though that didn't count for much it seems.

I asked why he said that it didn't count much. He said that it was a long story, but in short the efforts he'd made to rouse people here to action have been ignored.

I asked what he wanted them to do. He said he wanted them to ... to care. Was that so much effort? I said care about what. He patted the tree and said the

trees here, in the Hive. They're dying and no one cares. He said he thought it was a shame to see the last things of life and beauty in this ward left uncared for. Could I understand that?

I agreed that it was a sad thing. He was surprised at that. Thought it was wonderful. Then he said that perhaps I would ... but he supposed I had some questions for him now.

I said no, not just yet. What is it you were going to ask? For the first time since talking to him he seemed genuinely happy. He said it was difficult for anything to survive here. He wasn't sure that trees could survive here even if they had enough light and clean water. I told him to go on. He thought that if enough people cared and really wanted them to live, they would.

I said that he could be right. He said he was right; he was certain of it. That was all he wanted from me, for me to care. I told him truthfully that I'd help. (500) He thanked me and asked if I would speak to my companions on his behalf. I asked Morte what he thought. He tried to brush me off, but I told him I was serious. Morte looked at me for a moment and then said yeah, he could, if it was important to me.

I thanked Morte and told Mourns that I had some questions, if he didn't mind.

I asked why all the trees were dying. He said that besides the conditions the dabus rarely come to this part of Sigil. I asked what a dabus was. He said surely I'd noticed them. They're the Lady's servants; they care for the city.

I asked who the Lady was. He said she was the Lady of Pain. He said it does no one good to speak of the Lady. Know that she alone controls the city. I asked why the dabus don't come here often. He said the Hive's a dangerous place, but that's not the reason. He said it was because of Fell.

I asked who Fell was. He said Fell is the only dabus that doesn't serve the Lady. Mourns said he didn't know the all of it, but Fell is shunned by his fellows and lives here, alone. He runs a tattoo parlor, but most of Sigil is wary of the place.

I asked if he had any idea of why the place was shunned. He said he wasn't too sure. He said he'd only heard rumors that Fell was on the wrong side of the issue when some Power decided to butt heads with the Lady.

I asked if I should be wary of Fell's parlor. He said that since Fell had turned from the Lady many people think it's just a matter of time before her shadow falls on him.

I asked what Mourns knew of the parlor. He said that the parlor is only a few buildings east of here and is marked with his personal symbol. I told him to go on and he said that Fell is somehow able to turn images from his speech into tattoos with power in them.

Walking just south of the entrance to The Smoldering Corpse three thugs jumped me. They must have been in a hurry to visit one of the other planes. They went down quickly.

Fell

After collecting loot from the bodies of the thugs I went to see Fell and do some window-shopping. His shop was in the southeastern corner of this quarter of the Hive. Fell was strange even for a dabus.

I bid him (it?) greetings and he responded after his fashion. A series of symbols appeared over his head. Morte broke in expressing his frustration or disgust at talking to a dabus. I asked what Morte's problem was. He said that Fell was a

dabus and speaks in rebuses, these annoying word puzzles. If I didn't know what Fell was saying then we'd need a native or some other way to communicate with him, if we wanted to. Morte said he thought they could speak, but they would just rather piss everyone else off.

I asked what a dabus was. He said that they're janitors for the Lady. They float around breaking, fixing and patching up Sigil according to her whims. I asked who the Lady was. He said the Lady of Pain runs the city. He said I'd know her if I see her. She had these blades around her face, she's about the size of a giant and she floats off the ground just like dabus. Nobody knows much about her, but all I needed to know is that I don't want to make her angry. He said if I saw her I should run.

I told him to hold on a moment. Had he noticed that this dabus walked on the ground? Morte looked at the dabus again and his eyes widened. He exclaimed that he knew they could walk all the time. He said this one must not be as aloof. I said maybe so.

[The first time you try to talk to a dabus you will get this choice.]

Fell had waited patiently through all this. As we came to a pause in our discussion a series of symbols appeared again above his head. (1000) I attempted to strike up a conversation and see if I could translate what Fell was saying. After a lot of trial and error I eventually got the hang of it. It felt familiar, like I'd done this before.

I said that maybe Fell could help me. I asked who he was. The symbol of a circle with a lightning bolt appeared over his head. I said that I felt I knew him. Fell bowed reverently and a stream of symbols swirled about his head. He seemed to be saying that we had met before.

I asked if he knew who I was. The symbols came and went again. He again said he knew me, but would not say more. I asked why not. He paused and then the rebuses flowed. He said he was sorry, but I couldn't translate the rest.

Leaving that subject lie I asked what this place was. His response was visually stunning. He said he was an artist and this was his tattoo parlor. I asked if I could see his tattoos and he showed me his stock.

At the moment all of his works were out of my price range, but I noted the different tattoos with a view to the future. I thanked Fell and left the shop.

Amarysse

South of The Smoldering Corpse I met Amarysse. She asked if I wanted company. I said no, but I had some questions. She said that she was sorry, but she wasn't standing there to answer questions so I left.

The Smoldering Corpse Bar

Walking near the entrance to the Corpse I heard music that interested me and went in.

Ignus

In the center of the bar was a strange sight. I saw a man, or something man-shaped, consumed by fire above a huge grill. At first I thought that the man, if such he was, was being roasted over the grill, but I realized that HE was the one doing the roasting. In fact, his inflammatory presence was providing all the heat for the bar as well as heating the grills for the kitchen. Somehow I just wasn't

very hungry at the moment. I tried talking to him, but he said nothing being content to rotate in place.

Drusilla

I saw a woman nearby. She looked as if she had been beaten some little time ago and there was a look of despair about her. Then she faced me and I wondered if I was imagining things. There was a spark in her eyes that belied her appearance. She bid me welcome.

I asked who she was. She said her name was Drusilla and I must be clueless. I said I thought not. She said whatever I said. I asked if she would answer some questions for me. She said yes.

I said I was looking for a journal, had she seen it? She said that sure, she'd kept an eye out for all stray journals just in case some scarred man walked into her favorite bar and asked about it. I said she had a smart mouth on her. She said yes, a smart mouth for a smart head. I said if she was so smart she should be able to answer my questions.

I asked what she could tell me about the Corpse. She said that this was the Smoldering Corpse, though the person smoldering ain't dead yet. He's just hanging around until someone comes along to help him out. Some come to see him, like fiends, some come because they don't want to be bothered and the name keeps most of the berks out.

I asked who he was. At that question the despair I'd seen earlier returned like an eclipse of the sun before she suppressed it. She said that was Ignus, one of the greatest wizards ever to come out of the Hive. They caught him and opened a channel to the Plane of Fire through him and now he's just a doorway for it,

keeping himself alive by will alone. If someone could find a way to douse him for a few moments it would give him his life back.

I said that someone should be able to do something. I went on to ask if she knew of Pharod. She snickered and called him the Collector King. She told me I could probably find him in the trash warrens on the far side of the Hive.

Ebb Creakknees

Going left in a far corner of the bar I saw Ebb. As soon as I walked up he exclaimed at what a sight I was, so many scars on me, like a cloak. Then he told me his name and extended his hand. I said my greetings.

He apologized for his unfair jesting and hoped there were no hard feelings. He asked if he could buy me a tankard. I said why not? He said that was the spirit and told me to wait while he fetched the drinks.

When he got back he asked what he could do for me. I said I had some questions and he settled down to answer them. I asked who he was. He said he was Ebb Creakknees, Third Measure of the Harmonium, now retired and turned tout. He asked who I was and what trouble I was in.

I asked what made him think I was in trouble. He said someone with this many scars had to be in some sort of trouble. Did I take him to be blind? He asked if he could help.

I said I did have a few. I'd woke up in the Mortuary and seemed to have forgotten who I was. He took a moment to let my words sink in. Looking more closely at me he said it was no wonder they took me for dead, he might have made the same mistake.

[There are conversations like this, where several different subjects are presented at once as a result of one question you ask. In the interests of brevity I have not put down the redundant conversation leading back. In this case I skipped talking about asking who Ebb was again and just went to asking about the Third Measure of the Harmonium.]

Going back to what he'd said about himself I asked what the Third Measure of the Harmonium was. He puffed up a bit and said that he'd been in many fights so now he just bided his time keeping tabs on things down here in the Hive and helping out where he could.

I asked what fights he'd been in. He said more than he could remember. He did an all too-long tour during the Blood War, the infernal War of Lies on Terras, the Black Centuries War, the Three-Planes War and many others, even the Harmonium War of Liberation. Towards the end he was also in the Sigil City Watch. A chill ran down me when he mentioned the Blood War and I asked him to tell me more.

He said that it was the most dangerous family feud this side of the primordial soup. A mean-spirited mob of fiends on one side and a batch of warmonger fiends on the other. I asked about the two groups of fiends. He said they were the tenar'ri, vicious killers who care only for themselves and the baatezu war machine all for law and order under their infernal rules. The whole mess spills into the other planes from time to time making the multiverse a less pleasant place to live.

I asked what a tout was. He said they were a newcomer's best friend for directions and information. In his case, his information was free. I asked why and he told me that it wasn't fair to charge when he doesn't move from this spot.

I asked how old he was. He said he was old enough to know better and too old to walk much and there are only a few irons that keep his heart beating. I asked what irons. He said he was hoping that a holy fella will be making his way to the Corpse and he'll shrive Ebb of some of Ebb's private sins so Ebb can go on and step off of this plane for good.

I asked if he knew Pharod. He wondered aloud why I would be wanting a berk like him. I said that I thought he stole some of my belongings. He said he didn't doubt it. I asked what he knew about Pharod. He said that he didn't know everything, but he knew some of the dark surrounding Pharod.

He told me that Pharod dig's his nest deep in Ragpicker's Square and not too long ago got a bunch of collectors and gangs together and started what could almost be called a collecting faction. I asked where I could find him. He said that if I was looking for Pharod, which Ebb though pretty barmy of me, then I would want to be finding Ragpicker's Square and talking to the locals there.

I asked if he had heard of my journal. He said that unless there was more to my journal than just pages and words he couldn't imagine many bloods that would bother with it, but he said if Pharod was the one who'd scraped me off the street he might have it.

I asked about the bar. He said that it wasn't a pretty place, but it had it's own kind of charm. I thought he must be barmy at that. This bar had all the charm of a charnel house and none of the amenities.

I asked what he knew of the patrons. He gave me the rundown. He said there was O, who claimed to be a letter instead of a person, some Mercykillers waiting around for a criminal, a pair of abishai on furlough from the Blood War, a githzerai who's had an eye on me since I entered and Alais, a clueless kid whose

britches seem a bit tight. If I wanted information on the planes I could talk to Candrian Illborne. He knows more than most.

I asked about Ignus. He said he wasn't a corpse. Near as can tell he is still alive. I asked how he got here. He said that Ignus liked to burn things and he started torching places and people and generally making trouble.

I told him to go on. He said that most of this was going on in the Hive and as the Harmonium doesn't visit the Hive too often, something Ebb wasn't proud of, there was a little street justice handed out by the wizardly community. Several different types of mages and what not got together and managed to weave a spell that was poetic justice. That Ignus is still alive is something Ebb didn't think they'd counted on.

I asked him to tell me about Sigil. He said for what's outside I should talk to Candrian. For the rest, Ebb could tell me of the Lady, the dabus, keys and portals, the lay of the city and how they keep time.

I asked about the Lady. He said that not many know much about her. She's a mystery: silent and deadly. She keeps the dark about herself pretty tight and those who've been too nosey have been mazed. I asked what he meant by mazed. He said that sometimes bloods will be packed off to a place where they can't do any harm. The Lady will take a little bit of Sigil and make a dimensional pocket out of it. She puts those that have crossed her there and lets them rot.

But he said that the mazes weren't escape-proof, there's always a way out. You just have to figure out where it is and how to use it.

I asked what he knew about the dabus. He said they are the Lady's janitors and workmen. He said you don't want to interfere with them or the Lady will come down on you quick.

I asked how they measure time here. He said they measure it by the brightness of the sky. They don't have a sun and moon here and there's this haze that is always overhead, but it brightens and darkens at regular intervals. What most folks call midnight they call anti-peak and noon is called peak.

I asked about the city's layout. He said that Sigil floats on an infinitely tall spire. It lies on its side like a wagon wheel, but there's no spokes that connect it to the Spire. It's divided into six wards, each of them with its own function. Factions divide up the running of the city between them.

I told him to go on and he said that the city was called the crossroads of the planes, the City of Doors and the Cage. All manner of beasties come through to trade and pass through to other-where's.

I asked what he knew about portals. He said that there's portals everywhere. Portals are like doors that lead across the multiverse, except they don't look like doors. They can be anything, any bounded space, like a window or a pothole, even a picture frame.

Each portal has a key. Keys can be anything from a tune you hum when near the portal, to dancing a jig, being in the right mood—anything. But portal hopping is dangerous and not to be taken on a lark.

I asked if he was in a faction. He said he was no has-been faction member. Once you're part of the Harmonium, you're part for life. The Harmonium tries to keep what passes for peace.

I asked what of other places. He said from looking at me I might be interested in Fell's. He told me I should beware of the Alley of Dangerous Angles. Ignus

torched that place not long ago and ever since a bunch of bad bloods have set up their kip in that stretch.

[Whenever you're walking around in a new area move the mouse all over the screen. I completely missed the Gathering Dust Bar the first time through the northeast quarter of the Hive, which is why I go back at this point rather than talk to everyone in the Smoldering Corpse.]

NE Hive

Gathering Dust Bar

The atmosphere of the Corpse finally drove me outside (nothing like the smell of burning flesh and fiends with poor hygiene to work up an appetite ... for fresh air) so I went to the Gathering Dust Bar to find the owner of Angyar's contract and breathable air.

The bar was filled with Dustmen and the undead staff. While the amenities of the Corpse were atrocious the patrons at the Dust must have taken a vow of silence. It was like walking into a tomb, only less entertaining.

Awaiting-Death

Among the many happy patrons I saw a particularly disconsolate fellow staring at the wall. I said hello. He was so overcome with joy at my greeting that he just sat there, staring. Maybe I should change my after-shave. I tried again. He contained his glee and continued staring at the door. Oh, this is going SO well. Morte broke the cheerful silence and hissed at me that we should go. I agreed.

As we turned to leave the Dustie suddenly spoke. I could barely make out what he said, but it sounded like he wanted to die. I asked what he said. He asked me if I wanted to die. Being of two minds on the subject I said I really didn't know and asked him the same question.

He said yes. Big surprise. With my usual grace I asked him the obvious, why hadn't he done himself in already? He said he had been studying ways and means. He asked if I would kill him. Hey, why should I do all the work? I said to him that if he lacked the conviction to kill himself I wasn't going to do it for him.

He said it was not a matter of conviction. I said then it must be another matter. I asked him what it was about living that drove him to hate it?

He said that this existence is a mockery of life. He did not wish to continue the charade any longer. A regular barrel of laughs, this one. I said that was a bleak outlook; that there is a lot more to life than pain and hatred.

He asked this is living? He said that death is silent, comforting. I said trust me, it's not. He didn't like that and asked how would I know. I said that I don't know. I've yet to see what lies beyond death and remember it. If I die again, perhaps then I could speak of it.

He called me a liar and said that no man can die more than once. Not without being resurrected by mighty magics. I asked about resurrection. He said that was being brought back to life. I asked who would be capable of such power. He said a powerful sorcerer or priest or one of the Powers. Not anyone he knew and he didn't think I knew anyone of that sort, either.

I said that I could prove to him that I can die. He said what did I mean? Me and my big mouth. I broke my neck. My vision gradually came back, but my death

felt different this time. Awaiting-Death looked horrified and fascinated. I asked if he was convinced now.

He asked if I was one of the walking dead. I said that I didn't know. He said then what am I. I said that I don't know, but that I die and am reborn. He asked if I still think and feel. I said that yes, I did, but there was a hollowness that never leaves you at peace.

He was aghast and remarked that to be dead and still think and feel? Would misery every leave a body be? I said that perhaps he should not be so quick to abandon this life before knowing what the next life holds.

He sat silently, thinking. Eventually he turned back to me and said that my words carried weight and a fresh perspective and he would do as I say. I said that was all that I asked and bid farewell. (500)

Norochj

At another table I met Norochj. When I approached he pointed at himself and said Norochj. Initiate. Dustman. Guard. I said he looked troubled. He said he was. I asked what was wrong. He said he had many troubles and that I could help. He said a mausoleum awakes, the dead walk, the dead disturbed, Dustmen disturbed. Find out what disturbs the undead and coppers he will pay.

I said very well and asked where the mausoleum was. He said it was by the Dustman Memorial. I said farewell.

Sere the Skeptic

Near the bar was an elderly woman who started at me as I approached. She asked me what crypt I crawled out of. I said I was fresh from the Mortuary. She

was happy to hear that and said that there were too many cobwebs and dusty minds.

I asked wasn't she a Dustman? She said she supposed and that she'd seen enough sand pass through the hourglass while wearing these robes. I asked if she was afraid of dying. She said that of course she was, who wasn't? Except Dustmen. She said they weren't afraid because they've swallowed so much of their own absurdities over the decades that they think death is some kind of release.

I said it was a release, of a sort. She said if I thought it was a burden then perhaps. She wasn't convinced of that. I asked what had sparked this crisis of faith. She said that life had, she supposed. She demurred at boring me with the details. I said that I'd like to hear.

She asked how old did I take her to be? I said old. She snorted and said she was really old. She said she'd taught many of the Dustmen and had no questions; no doubt that life was merely the antechamber that lead to the True Death.

I asked what happened. She said that half a month back she went sick with the fever. She thought it was the end and it rattled her cage. I asked how. She said that there's something about having your faction members circle around your deathbed like a pack of ghouls agreeing that your suffering is all for the best. 'How fortunate is Sere for she shall soon be relieved of the burden of life.' That was when it struck her.

I prompted her "That ..." She said that there is something addled about not appreciating your life. The Dustmen keep saying the life is misery and suffering ... is it? That we should be happy to pass into oblivion. Questions; questions and precious few answers.

I said it sounded like she doesn't believe the Dustmen philosophy anymore. She said that she supposed she had a swarm of doubts buzzing in her skull. Hard to get them all to be quiet. They need answers and she doesn't have it all worked out yet. I asked her what she would do. She said she didn't know.

I told her that if she had truly believed the Dustman philosophy then her brush with the fever would not have left her with such doubts. **(500)** She looked at me and nodded slowly. She said she would have to chew it over. I said she should, it is no small matter.

She said enough about her and asked if I hadn't had my views changed by my handshakes with death. I said that my brushes with death are closer than most. I can't seem to stay dead.

She said I must have been rattling her coffin. I said it's true. She said the ways of the Planes are strange, but if that's true, why does it happen? I said all I know is that I woke up in the Mortuary with no memory and covered with enough wounds to kill me three times over.

She glanced around and said that I shouldn't be saying that too loudly. I asked if she had any idea why this happens. She said not a one.

Asking her about Pharod, I heard again that he was to be found in Ragpicker's Square. She said I should be wary of that area because some Collectors aren't patient enough to wait for folks to die.

I asked about other Dustmen I knew of. When I asked about Soego. She told me that he used to be a regular, but she thought he might have been shaken up after his friend died. I asked her to explain. She said that one of his friends was killed in the Hive a few weeks ago, torn apart by rats. I asked if he'd always

been a guide at the Mortuary. She said no, only for the past few months. Last she'd heard he was just sent off for missionary duty, but she didn't know where. I thanked her for her information and left.

Mortai Gravesend

I found him sitting at a table, fidgeting. He thought I looked familiar and asked if we'd met before. I said it was possible, but was he certain it was I? He thought he might have been mistaken. Then he got down to business and asked if I was seeking the contract.

I asked what contract. He said it was a simple transaction. He said he would pay me fifty commons. In return—after death—the Dustmen may claim my remains. I asked what the Dustmen would do with the body. He said it didn't matter since I would be dead. I said it mattered to me.

He said that if I must know, that oft times nothing is done with the body. But rarely there are times when the workers in the Mortuary need to be replaced and then we may have a need for your body.

I said that being an animated corpse and working in the Mortuary didn't sound good. He said that no harm was done, no pain. And there is no danger. In exchange for money to use in this life you merely have to give us something you will have no need of anyway once you have died. He said he'd even signed the contract himself.

All things considered I didn't see the harm in another 50 commons so I signed the contract. He was overjoyed and showed me where to sign. I said that he showed more emotion than any other Dustman I'd met. His smile froze on his face. He said he hoped that I'd meant no offense.

I said that I did not, but that he seemed awfully eager to sign this contract with me and for a Dustman, eagerness strikes me as odd. He asked if I wanted to sign the contract or not. I asked if there was a problem with showing emotion. He said there certainly was. Too much passion, too much emotion prevents one from reaching the True Death.

I asked his views on the True Death. He said that the True Death is the state of peaceful oblivion all Dustmen aspire to. Our faction shuns anything that ties the soul to this life, whether these ties are possessions or emotions.

I said I would sign the contract now. (500) As I signed, the quill pen made a strange sound, like a dagger writing on steel. As I tried to sign the parchment kept shifting beneath my pen. No matter how hard I tried I could not sign my name.

I asked Mortai what was going on. When I looked up I saw that his face had been replaced with a grinning skull. The rest of the bar was silent, the patrons frozen like statues. Mortai opened his mouth and a wisp of dust trailed from inside the skull.

He—it spoke, saying “Sign, but remember everything has its price. And what can change the nature of a man?” The words sounded as if they were spoken by many voices—old, young, female, male, desperate, calm, hysterical ...

I found myself saying aloud, almost as an echo “Nature of a man ...” As I did so I felt faint, and the next thing I heard was Mortai’s voice—HIS voice, this time and felt his hand on my shoulder. He asked if I was all right. I tried to get my bearings.

Time began running again at its accustomed pace and Mortai no longer had a skull for a face. Something HAD happened. I felt a pressure inside my skull of

something unable to escape and I knew that each voice that issued from the death's head belonged to someone now long dead. I told Mortai to give me a moment and I would be fine.

I knew this was not the first time I had penned my name to a contract and perhaps not the first time I'd signed one such as this. I told Mortai that I would like to think some more before signing. Mortai accepted my hesitation and said he would be happy to answer any questions I had.

I asked if he was the one who had signed the contract with Angyar. He said perhaps, but he did not recall the name. I asked if he had the contract with him. He frowned and then looked in the folds of his robes. He pulled a sheaf of papers from his robes and rifled through them. After a few moments he said that he didn't have it on him and would I like for him to fetch it from one of the back rooms. I asked if he kept contracts here. He said he kept them until they were shipped to the Mortuary.

When he offered again to fetch the contract from a back room I said that if he could I would like to see it. He was gone for a few moments, and then returned.

I looked at the document. It appeared genuine and very official. I agreed that it looked in order. He asked if that answered my questions about the document. I said that I would like to settle the contract.

He said that was impossible. The contract was signed, settled and binding. I countered that the contract was tearing Angyar's life apart. I said it was possible that he might not even be able to approach the True Death with such emotions churning in his mind.

Mortai chewed on that for a moment, then said that he could not. It was a matter of law, besides the burden lies upon the signer to overcome his own feelings in order to reach the True Death.

I asked if he was willing to deny Angyar the True Death for the sake of a piece of parchment? He said it was not how I was making it out to be.

I said that he obviously held the philosophy of the Dustmen in contempt to damn a man's soul over a piece of paper. I said that if other members of his order did not know of his conduct they soon would.

He glared and then threw the contract at me. I told him farewell, for now.

Emoric

In the far left corner of the bar I saw a Dustman who seemed to be running the place. As I greeted him he said that I had the look of one who is lost. He asked if the wind sent me or was I here with a purpose?

I asked who he was. He said he was Emeric, Factotum and Initiate of the Fourth Circle. Well lah dee dah. I asked if this was his bar. He said spiritually, yes.

I asked if he had seen Pharod. He wanted to know why I sought him. I said that he stole something from me. Emeric just stared at me. I asked why he wanted to know my business with Pharod. He said that Pharod has brought many corpses to the Mortuary lately. One must ask where these bodies are from.

I asked him to tell me more about the bodies. He said that some are recent-dead, and many more are centuries dead. I suggested that perhaps I could find out where these bodies are from. He asked how I would do such a thing. I said I would track down Pharod and ask him.

Emoric said that if I spoke with Pharod and returned with his answers I would have done a great service for the Dustmen and would be rewarded. I said I would find Pharod, speak to him and find out where these dead bodies he brings you are from. He said that I should return when I had the answers.

I asked if he could tell me where Pharod is. He said that it was not known to him where Pharod is. He hides from the eyes of the Dustmen.

[This is as good a place as any to note that any container, such as a barrel or chest, may be used to store items that you don't want to wag around. Anything you put in a container will still be there however long you wait before returning. Things you leave on the ground are NOT so protected and will eventually disappear. Even needed quest objects are not safe.]

The Post

Just north of the Gathering Dust I saw a zombie in sad shape. Among the numerous stains and graffiti were several notices. I examined the corpse more closely. There was a cobblestone embedded in his head. I pried it out. (250)

I then looked at the notices. After looking at the bill of fare for the Smoldering Corpse Bar I said the name aloud. The zombie pointed in its general direction. It turned out that The Post would do this for any of his ads.

When I was done with the notices I looked over the graffiti. There was one that drew my attention. Someone had carved Pharod's name into the thing's left arm then slashed an X across it. I spoke Pharod's name and the zombie pointed far to the west and downwards. (500)

Angyar's House

Back at Angyar's house I spoke to his wife and told her I was able to get the contract from Mortai. She was so happy I just gave her the contract. She said I should show it to him instead. So I said I would.

He was in his usual foul temper, but when I showed him the note he seemed shocked for a moment, but then became as belligerent as before, asking where I'd gotten it. I said that I'd taken it off of a Dustie named Mortai, and that it had his name on it. He asked if I'd come to collect ransom on it. I tore it up in front of him.

He looked like a great weight had been lifted off of him, but as he turned to thank me suspicion returned and he wanted to know what my price was. I said he should consider this free. And he should expect a lot of rules in the Hive to change while I'm around. (750)

His face finally relaxed and he gave me his thanks and said that I could rest there anytime.

Mausoleum

I went off to see about the Mausoleum for Norochj. Going through the portal, I was met by a Guardian Spirit who moved to block my path. He wasn't happy to see me. I tried to greet him, but he bade us leave now.

I said that I had some questions first. He said I should seek my answers elsewhere. This place is a sanctuary for the dead. He said he would not permit their slumber to be disturbed by yet another insolent mortal.

I asked if someone else had been there. He said that if I must know there is another intruder who, even now, violates the sanctity of these halls. I asked why he did not drive this intruder away. He said that he could not. The coward had sealed himself within the inner chamber of the Mausoleum and erected powerful wards. He uses his dark arts to awaken and bend the dead to his will.

I said that perhaps I might be of assistance. He was silent for a time as he considered me. At last he said that I might prevail where he had failed. He said if I pledged to rid him of this blackguard he would grant me passage. I said I'd do it.

I went right at the first choice and followed the passage until I came to a T intersection where we fought several skeletons. The fight took quite a lot out of us, but I felt a little better when I found a silver ring in a disturbed grave at the juncture.

Going north, the passage ended in an exit for another area of the Mausoleum. I returned and went south, taking the other branch of the T. It was a winding passage, turning east before running into another T. I turned right and went south.

After a short way I came to yet another T. Turning right and moving west, I was immediately set upon by a giant skeleton. It was a tough fight, but he eventually went down. Moving further into the corridor he was guarding I found the entrance to a room and walked through.

Strahan Runeshadow

In a large room with many skeletons I saw a man in long black robes. Seeing me he said he was surprised I'd made it this far. I said I was glad to have

disappointed him and asked if he was the one responsible for all the walking dead.

He said that who he was didn't matter, but what he wanted should concern me. I said very well, what do you want? He said that he wanted my blood. I asked if that was some kind of threat.

He started to answer, then began laughing. He said yes, he supposed it was. As he said this he began moving his arms in an intricate manner. The skeletons closed in as the spell went off. We were surrounded and tried to cut our way through the pack of skeletons to reach Strahan, but it was no good. There were too many of them and we were too weak from our previous encounters. And so, I died.

Mortuary

Not so bad, this dying, I might almost get used to it. Apart from the splitting headache, the awful taste in my mouth and the excruciating pain, that is. I made my way back to the Mortuary entrance.

NE Hive

I went to Angyar's house to sleep off my hangover and give Morte a chance to heal.

SE Hive

East of the Smoldering Corpse I saw a Barking Wilder standing against a wall. As we approached him three hive thugs attacked. After the first went down the others tried to flee, but they fell where they stood.

Barking-Wilder

This fellow must have considered bathing a personal insult. After a moment of thought, I growled at him. He stopped snarling at me and spoke in riddles. I tilted my head, studying him.

He spoke another riddle, "Singed kissspeakd a man, answerssss pre-fur a wood woman heart." If clarity were next to godliness, this berk would be on one of the lower planes of hell. I said that a single kiss speaks a woman's heart, but a man's answer is what he would prefer? Very well, but know this: my answer is a question and an answer from you is what I would prefer.

Something in my words seemed to mesmerize him though his speech was not much clearer than before. He said Barking Wilder am-I, I am! A-Wanting, Asking-A, May-You, You-May?

I said he may and I will ... who or what was he? He said he was Kay-osh, some say Xaositects, I say S-tect-I-soax. Chaosmen. Men no. Nem no, men yes, three nose make a yes.

Resisting the impulse to kill him and put him out of my misery I continued and asked if he knew Pharod. He said not. I think. My headache was returning.

Not learning anything from my experience, I asked about my journal. (1000) He changed and he suddenly spoke almost normally. He said that more than one was lost, more than one I must find. I asked if he could tell me where any of them were. He said that one is in a cupboard in my guest room in the hall of the Sensates and another is on the walls of a tomb sealed deep beneath the city where the stones weep. The others ... At this point his fist smashed him in the mouth. He blinked, shook his head and smiled.

The moment of near-sanity had vanished and I could get no further details from him about anything, so I left. Morte and I talked about the whole barmy Chaosmen-lot as we walked away.

Bariaur

To the west of the Corpse I saw a strange creature. It stood on 4 legs and had the features of both man and ram. A massive polearm of some nature hung from his belt-harness.

He was suspicious at first and I said that I just had some questions, which seemed to calm him. I asked why he was so wary of me. He said that this place is full of unfriendly, desperate people. Not the best place for a visiting bariaur. He had business here, though, so here he was.

I asked then he didn't live here? He said no, that no bariaur could live thus. I asked where he was from. He said he was from the Plains of Ysgard.

I asked what sort of business he was here for. He said that perhaps if we met another time in a happier place he would tell me about it.

We talked about the city and the slums. His perspective, that of a traveler and a different species, made it interesting. Unfortunately he knew nothing about my journal or Pharod. I made my good-byes and left.

SW Hive

Entering the next quarter of the Hive to the southwest I saw a strange beast, like a small silver-gray dragon. I walked up to it and was about to say hello when

Morte stopped me. He said that this was a Black Abishai and they're not much for conversation. In fact, they hate it.

Talk. Hiss. Die. Reincarnate.

I decided to continue my attempts to communicate with the beast and began hissing at it. As the thing reacted to my presence it began glowing and the air around it started to shimmer. I felt waves of heat coming off the creature. Then it hissed like a giant teakettle and attacked me.

PAIN ... Then darkness again. Ow. Continued deaths were improving my headaches, making them much better at finding my pain centers. I blearily made my way back to the southwest quarter of the Hive.

Creeden

A dingy, retched man carrying a pole was standing in front of the Office of Vermin and Disease Control. ON the pole were dozens of skinned, cooked creatures. After a moment of study I saw that they were rats.

I examined the "ratsies." They were most peculiar looking, having large knots of bone protruding from their craniums. The knots had whirling patterns in them, like brain tissue. I remarked that they were odd looking rats.

He said all that he sold were brain vermin. They have a much richer flavor than your usual city rat. I asked what he meant by brain vermin. He said that they were foul creatures. When you get more than a handful of them together they start to get smart, sometimes real smart.

I asked if he meant they became more intelligent. He said yes, if more than two-score of them get together they're as smart as a man. I asked him to go on. He

said that if I were bent on catching them stick to small packs. A dozen or so, at most. He said if I ran into more than a couple of dozen I should run like the Lady was after me.

I asked why? He said they become sorcerous. He said that was why Sigil was so anxious to be rid of them and had put a bounty on them.

I asked about the bounty. He said that there was a berk in the Office of Vermin and Disease Control name of Lort who pays a bounty on them. I asked him to tell me more about this Lort fellow. He said Lort was some highup put down by his rivals and stuck here. He sits in the office alone all night and day waiting for folk to bring in rats.

I asked why Lort had been punished. He said that the fellow is right chatty, that he'll rattle his bone-box for hours on just how smart he is and the like.

I asked who he was. He said he was Creeden—the Butcher of Rats. I said he certainly was friendlier than most. He said that he tried. He wanted every cutter to know that he had a warm smile and a piping hot, fresh-cooked ratsie for them.

I asked where he got all his rats. He said that he catches them himself. I asked him to tell me about the Hive. He asked what I was looking to find out. I asked why it was called the Hive? He said that there are a number of stories, but as he understood it there were a cluster of buildings somewhere, a tangled mess of shacks and ruins that serves as a gathering ground of sorts. It was called the Hive, so that's where these slums got their name.

I asked who gathered at that place. He said troublemakers. He said that even if I could find it I should stay away.

I asked him other things, about the town and Pharod, then finally gave in and tried a spiced rat. It was actually quite good and tasted familiar, like I'd eaten something similar before.

[I should say that I've tried to record the location of every important item as I ran across them, but by all means you should explore new locations with your mouse. There are a huge variety of containers and locations with items, many of them not at all obvious.]

Phineas T Lort XXXIX

Walking into the Office of Vermin and Disease Control I saw a short, stout man who was more rash than skin. Apparently he didn't notice my approach. When I said hello he jumped and shrieked, then recovered himself and asked what he could do for me. But he also volunteered that there was almost nothing in the till.

I said that I wasn't here to plunder and asked who he was. It was like turning on a fire hose. He rattled off a long stream of words introducing himself as Phineas T. Lort the Thirty-Ninth in charge of this branch of the Office of Vermin. He said that they offered a bounty on all manner of vermin. The only thing he did more than talk was scratch.

When I asked he said that they would pay one copper for each cranium rat tail brought in. I asked for more information about cranium rats. He said they are a species of vermin that becomes more intelligent the more of them there are near each other. He ventured that 2 or 3 might be enough to outwit me. Cheeky git.

I suggested that his choice of wearing apparel might soon include his ass as a hat. He blinked at this and seemed to see me all over again, then apologized.

I asked how many rats were in Sigil. He said more than enough to last a bounty hunter a lifetime.

Then I made a miscalculation and asked what he was doing here. His tale was long-winded and BOOOORING ... Eventually sleep overcame us and we rested. Our snoring had no effect upon his tale for when I began returning to consciousness he was still prattling on. I felt myself slipping under again and had to stab myself several times before I was finally able to awaken fully.

Mindful of the double peril in talking to him further I asked if his rash was contagious. His answer was short and to the point. No, he wasn't contagious; the rash came with the job.

I thanked him for his time and left. Exploring the Office of Vermin I found a locked door that I could not get past. Phineas was mute about the door and I resolved to ask about it on another visit.

Leaving the building we were attacked by three thugs who quickly went the way of the rest. I'd have thought that the word would have gotten out by now not to mess with us.

Hot on the heels of the thugs was that blasted Abishai. Apparently, killing me once was not enough. I bravely ran away, straight into another group of thugs that we put down as soon as we could.

Crier of Es-Annon

To the west of the Office of Vermin I saw a man crying. He looked like a holy man of some sort. Catching my breath, I said hello. He stopped his chanting and looked at me, unable to speak. I asked what was wrong. He said that he was a Crier of Es-Annon.

I asked who Es-Annon was. He said Es-Annon was not a man, but a city. I asked why he cried for a city. He said we cry its name because Es-Annon must not be forgotten. All the Criers of Es-Annon carry this burden.

I asked why they would mourn a city. He said they mourn because its name is all that remains. Its avenues of light, its great spiraling parks ... when it was laid waist only three-score of its people survived. It was our duty to see that its name was remembered across the Planes. Many Criers have died for the sake of remembering.

I asked why they didn't stop if it placed them at risk. He said that the tears he shed, the dust that cloaks him ... these are as nothing compared to what awaits should he give up his sacred burden.

I said if that was so, what happens if they all die? He said he did not know. He knew they could not mourn it forever. I asked if there was any way I could help. He said I was kind to ask, but shook his head. He said unless I could immortalize Es-Annon, there was no way to help.

I asked if it had to be a Crier who called Es-Annon's name? He said another man might cry the name, but then he, too, would die. I asked if it was worth placing what remained of the city's people at risk.

He said that I had seen nothing; I knew nothing of its splendor. Would I discard such a perfect memory if I possessed it?

I said what about a tombstone then? He didn't seem to know what one was. I told him it was a stone that records a man's name, his life and a eulogy. If it served a man, could it not also serve a city?

He asked if stones might do such things. I said they could and that their lifetime is much longer than a man's. If Es-Annon's name were carved on stone would its memory be served?

He asked if others would see this name. I said it would be there for all to see, long after he had died. He said if such a thing were possible where would one find such a stone?

I said that I could go look for one. If I find one I could see that Es-Annon's name is carved upon it.

He said I would be setting all the Criers of Es-Annon free. The burden of remembering would be over after so many years. I said I would do so and return when the stone was carved.

Brasken

Continuing northwest to avoid the Abishai I entered an imposing structure. As soon as we went in a large man asked us in a loud, booming voice what we were doing there. Not being one to overstay my welcome, I left.

[I have to admit that at this point I ended up hacking my character so that I would have a high enough dexterity (14) for some of the dialogue choices in the game to work. I'm not happy about this, but in the interest of providing as complete a walkthrough as possible there wasn't any other way. For those playing I suggest not putting ANY points into constitution and putting those points into dex instead; that moves it to 12. Then you can put the first two points you get from leveling up into dex instead of intelligence to get to 14.]

Meir'am

Standing outside the Office of Vermin to the east I saw an old woman staring off into space. She had a pole from which hung various fish. I said hello. She offered me the catch of the day. I declined and asked for information instead.

She pursed her mouth and stared off over my shoulder. I looked to see what had caught her attention. Seeing nothing I turned back to her and caught her staring at me. She looked away quickly, staring into the distance once more.

I asked if I looked familiar to her. She said no, but after a moment said that I did. I asked if she'd seen me before. She said that she thought so. T'was so long ago. I asked her to tell me.

She said that the sight wasn't so good, but she thought she saw me walking past with a small group trailing along behind me. I asked what these people looked like. She said it was hard to say, but she remembered the way I held my head up. There was a woman following, trying to stop me, but I pushed her away.

I asked what happened then. She said the woman was beautiful and looked so sad and angry at once. The woman stood still for a moment then followed along behind me, hustling to catch up.

I asked who else was in the group. She shrugged and said there were at least tow other gentlemen with me, but the only one she remembered clearly was tall, thin and reeked of bub. Looked like he hadn't bathed in ages. I gave her twenty coppers for her time.

She stared at the coins for a moment, so I held them closer. She finally took them and thanked me.

[Be sure and save every time you're about to talk to someone. It is so easy to accidentally say the wrong thing or close off a conversational path when you don't want to.]

Iron Nails

North of Meir'am I saw a woman standing in the middle of a huge pile of wooden beams. Every so often she reached down and wrenched a nail from one of the beams with her hands. I said hello.

She straightened up as I approached and smiled, but her stance was wary. She asked what I needed.

I asked who she was. She said they called her Iron Nails. I asked why she was collecting the nails. She said she sold them to Hamrys in the Lower Ward. I asked for more about Hamrys. She said he was a bit chatty, but a fair bargainer.

I asked where the Lower Ward was. She said she used to know the way, but the dabus have changed the streets 'round again.

Going back a bit I asked what had happened to her eye. There was a film over it. Her face went hard. She said it was none of my business.

I asked if anyone else scavenged nails. She said no one had done it before her and she'd shoved off anyone who'd tried to jump her claim since.

I asked why she called it her claim. She said that honest work was hard to come by, that she'd sent more than one berk running. The Hive knows this is her spot.

She gave me directions to Ragpicker's Square when I asked about Pharod. When I asked about my journal she didn't know anything, but thought maybe she

would start one of her own. I said it was amazing how much one can forget. A journal can help you hold onto your memories. She said that I was right and thanked me for the idea.

After talking to her I was jumped by 2 thugs, but they quickly went down.

[I do not always give my response when there is only a choice of continue or quit listening or just to continue. It becomes too artificial to keep saying I listened or Go on over and over.]

Reekwind

North of Nails I saw a man with huge eyes that bulged out of their sockets. He nodded at me eagerly as I approached, bobbing his head like a bird. As I drew up to him the smell of urine and feces became overpowering. He offered stories for coin. When he opened his mouth to speak the smell of rotten meat was added to the malodorous brew.

I asked who he was. He said names were dangerous. I said dangerous how? He said knowing a name or being stuck with one, both are a mess of trouble. He said his name was a given one, not one asked for: Reekwind. I ventured that it was an appropriate name.

He said it was not his true name. A true name gives others power over you. Keep your true name secret and never let it out. My secret was certainly safe with me.

I asked what he meant. He said names are like smells; things can track you with them. In his case, why would they bother? I told him I didn't know my true name.

His eyes widened past the point of leaping from his head, yet they stayed put. I was glad I hadn't eaten lately. He said I was blessed, that if I remained nameless and nothing could track me nor could discover me. Any name, chosen or given, allows others to find and hurt you.

I asked if he'd been hurt. He nodded and said he'd let his name slip once, but wanted three coppers to tell the tale. I gave him the money.

He took a stance, and then began. He said he walked the wards in splendor. I listened closely. Then he crossed paths with a crossed one. Had the looking of a pumpkin, his seeds, and curses. I continued to follow his tale.

He said this one knew his name, cursed him with stench, smells, excrement. All he was good for were tales now. Now Reekwind was his name, given name.

I said I wanted to hear a story and gave him three more coppers. I said I wanted to hear the story of the man who came to this city without name or memory and spoke with the cursed storyteller.

He stared at me for a moment, then said that that tale would cost nothing for it is worth nothing and would be a sad tale indeed.

I said that nevertheless I would hear it. He asked where such a tale would begin. I said it would begin with a man waking up in the Mortuary, believed dead, but only his memories were dead.

He nodded then studied me, saying dead, but not dead. No memories, no name ... I went on, saying he escapes the Mortuary, enters the Hive and speaks to a man who let his true name slip once and had regretted it.

He seemed hypnotized by my words. He said yes, there was much danger in naming. Perhaps the man to whom the nameless one speaks is a warning to the danger of names. Perhaps he who has forgotten his name is better off ...

I asked if that were so? Was it better to suffer the truth with all its consequences or is it better to remain ignorant? Which of the two men is better off?

He coughed as if bringing up a lung then turned back to me and said it was my question, my tale. It was I who must answer it.

I said I wanted to know his answer. (500) He shook his head. He said his answer was that they were both fools, but only one knows himself a fool.

Again I asked for a story and paid the coppers. This time I waited for him to choose. He told me of the Alley of Dangerous Angles. Not always angled, not always burned, once alive, but not any longer.

As I listened, he continued. Flames, fire, the alley burned. In the end only skeletons of buildings left, bones of dead buildings. Angles everywhere.

He went on ... Dangerous, now, bad men have set up their kip there. That is the tale of how a street becomes an Alley of Dangerous Angles.

I asked how the fire started. He said that a man made it so. I beast made it so. A man whom even fiends admire. I asked who? He said a sorcerer's tale, filled with madness, sadness, burning, yearning, but three coppers he must see before the telling.

I paid him and he began. A sorcerer there was, a mage of power. I leaned in to hear better. He went on. The name given him was Ignus, a name respected, then feared, then hated, and then punished.

I let him continue. He said Ignus was taught by one of the last great magi, and that as an apprentice, Ignus learned much and nothing at the same time. In his coal-black heart a fire blazed and hungered. It was his wish to see the Planes burn.

I listened ... In the night Ignus came to the Alley that was to be of Angles and the fire in his eyes and heart he let out. Flesh ran like wax, people like candles and Ignus laughed. Evil was done and forgotten not.

A punishment was decided. All the hedge wizards, midwives, rune-tellers ... all manner of magelings, they came. All; even those with the smallest trace of the Art to punish Ignus. Separately they were like flies, but together ... dangerous.

Caught Ignus and granted his wish. He wished to burn, they granted it, using his own desire to fuel the casting. They made his body a door to the Plane of Fire. They intended to kill him.

Failed, failed ... Ignus lived, only slept, blanket of flames, turned in his sleep as he burned, never happier. One day he will wake and then the Planes shall burn.

Merchants

Leaving Reekwind and letting my nose recover I went west to the market square. There were merchants buying and selling all sorts of wares. I took the opportunity to sell off the various items I'd picked up along the way that were surplus.

[Whenever you sell to a merchant sell ALL of one type of item (e.g. copper bracelet) that you have. When you take your next batch of loot to that merchant to sell again you will find prices drastically reduced. In the example of a copper

bracelet, if the price was 40 the first time it drops to 15 on the second selling. Many players resorted to stockpiling their loot at a location near the market and selling only when they had to have cash. Personally, I sold when I needed space in my inventory and didn't worry about it. I had enough gold to buy whatever I wanted most of the time.]

Kossah-Jai

I found the crone Kossah-Jai selling fish to the west of the wagons and crates that occupied the center of the Market. She offered me fish and fish heads as I walked up, calling me child. I said I was hardly a child.

She laughed and said yes, but a child I was to her years. I suggested she take a closer look. She shuffled up to me and squinted at my face, then into my eyes. Only then does she recoil in surprise. She asked how many years had those eyes seen?

I said I did not know and asked how many she thought. She said she didn't know. Too many, she'd say. It won't do to rattle the passersby, let's keep it our little secret. In her normal voice she offered me fish again.

She had no answers for other questions, but we talked of her fish and where they came from then I took my leave.

[There are many characters like this who you will encounter in Planescape and after meeting them wonder why on earth they have names since you don't interact much with them when you meet. That's because they are part of events later on. This character, for example, is one of the many people you will deal with when you undertake mage training with Mebbeth.]

Craddock

I finally found Craddock north of some large crates in the Market Square. He was a large and imposing individual and looked like he was bearing a heavy load. I bid him greetings.

He looked down at me and frowned even more, asking what I was doing sniffing around here for? I asked if he was Craddock. He said perhaps. If he was, what was it to me?

I said that I came with a message from Baen the Sender and gave him the message. I really made his day; he was even more upset than before asking if they were such fools that they think we could miracle it there?

I asked what the problem was. He said just look around and nodded at the laborers in the marketplace. He said these laggards and halfwits could barely keep up with the load as it stands and now it needs doing in half the time.

I asked if he needed any help. He said what he needed was for all his men to show up for work. Jhelai's gone missing since this morning and Craddock needed him back now. I asked where he might have gone. Craddock said that the goat was probably passed out on the street somewhere by the Corpse. I suggested that I could go find him.

He asked why I would do that? I remarked that he needed the help, didn't he and it didn't seem that he could spare the time to go looking for him.

He was silent while he thought about this, and then nodded. He said to tell Jhelai to drag his worthless, bub-ridden hide here and Craddock would pay me for my trouble. Just in case, he gave me directions on where to find the Smoldering Corpse.

I felt like Sam Spade. Missing persons? I have to find Jhelai. OW! This Abishai is getting annoying. Try to talk to someone and he starts gnawing on you.

Gaoha

I ran a little ways off to elude the Abishai again and bumped into Gaoha just north of Craddock. He was covered in tattoos and his teeth had been filed to points. He saw me and waved me over rattling dice in his hands.

I said hello. He said Gaoha greets me as well and did I come to play a game? I said that yes, I would play. He reached into his tunic and pulled out a coin. He said that this coin was my coin. Pulling out another he said that coin was his and that we both roll one die.

He said if I roll higher I get both coins. If he rolled higher, he got both. If we tied, then the coins would stay for another roll. So how much did I want to risk?

I played 10. We rolled until Gaoha won. He said again? I asked if something was wrong. He looked at me closely for a moment, and then nodded. He said that never did he cheat, but he did see fortune, read it, and know it in the face of a man. However, in me he saw nothing. He said I had no luck or fortune. We might play later, but no more at this moment.

Lim-Lim

While running through the Market being chased by the Abishai I saw these odd creatures flitting about. Eluding the Abishai for a moment I came back and talked to the merchant who was selling them.

I asked what they were. He said that Lim-Lims are from the Outlands, neither insect nor animal. They are friendly, playful and quite loyal. He leaned close and whispered that they were pretty tasty too, in a pinch.

I thought it time I got a hobby, so I bought one. He told me about the care and feeding, not that they seem to need any. They find their own food. He wanted 40 coppers. I asked Morte what he thought. He said he thought they'd be fun to kick around when we're down. Ah Morte, what a sentimental fellow he is. I said I'd take one.

I put him in my hand, and then talked to it. Yes, one of my future selves will no doubt think I'm daft. I examined the creature, and then started petting it. It was hard to stop, once I started. The little guy seemed to like it so much and the noise it made when happy was soothing.

I put him down to run around a bit and moved on. He followed us wherever we went. After a bit I picked him back up and carried him in my hand.

Tiring of being chased by the Abishai I went to the northwest quarter of the Hive.

NW Hive

As we entered the quarter 3 thugs who hadn't gotten the word attacked us and died.

One-Ear

Walking further north we came to a brute called One-Ear. He was picking his teeth with a small metal fork. I said my greetings. He was churlish and insulting, but for now I ignored him and moved on.

Fleece

Further west, near another monument I saw a short, rotund man who looked quite lost. I approached him and said hello. He was relieved to see me and said he was lost; could I help him?

I said certainly, where was he trying to go? He said he was looking for the house of his Aunt Marguerite who lives near the Mortuary, but the street layout seems to have changed since his last visit.

I said I had not heard of such a place. He thanked me for my time, anyway. I was about to turn away, when I felt something amiss. I glanced at the man again in time to see him withdrawing his hand from my purse.

Intrigued, I baited the man to do it again. (1250) He used his garb as a high-class citizen to lower the target's guard and when directions are being pointed out his long sleeves quickly concealed whatever he took. I grabbed his hand.

He struggled to break free. I told him to stop. He continued to try to break free so I punched him to get his attention. He yelped again and looked at me with an unsteady gaze. I asked if I now had his attention.

I told him to give back everything he stole from me. He nodded and began to empty his pockets. He gave me a handful of coins, more than he stole.

I told him I wanted everything he had or I'd kill him. He said that was everything. I said that I meant everything so give it to me. He said that really was it. I told him I didn't want to see him again and let him go.

[There are several of these pickpocket incidents in the game. Choose the response that suits your mood and character. There is a downside to letting the fellow go. He then counts as hostile and you can't save the game while he's on the screen.]

As he ran off three thugs died trying to rob me.

Prophiron

To the east of an old flophouse I saw a man who had a very odd appearance. His skin was covered in a web of black lines as if an artist had accentuated every crease in his flesh with a quill pen. I said greetings.

He responded, saying this one has a name: this one is called Porphiron. This one would know: why do you address this one?

I told him I wanted to ask him some questions about the city. He said that this one would have me know: this one cannot answer my questions. This one has only recently stepped foot in this place of walls.

I said all right, but I had to ask him why the lines on his face moved. He said the lines showed anger; did I take offense? No offense was meant: will I accept the many apologies of this one?

I said no offense was taken and asked why he was angry. He answered that this one tells of recent event: did I know this one was beset by three? The three demanded an item of this one. This one feared an attack: what does this one do? This one surrendered the item.

I said that he was right to be afraid. If there were three then they might have killed him had he not given up the item. He said that this one has been

misunderstood. This one did not fear being killed: this one feared killing the three.

I said that if he could have killed them why did he let them rob him. He said that this one walks the path of a warrior: many weapons have walked with this one. The fist, the blade, the stave, the hatchet, and the smiter: these tools are all known to this one.

I said that wasn't really an explanation and again asked why he let them rob him. He said that this one is forbidden to attack. If this one had struck at the three in anger: the vow of non-violence would be unmade.

THIS one is getting a headache from THAT one. Not really believing what I'd heard I asked if he was, indeed a warrior and a pacifist. Like being a vegetarian butcher, it made no sense. He said this one is unfamiliar with the term pas-ivisst.

I told him to never mind that and asked why did he train so much if he was not permitted to attack another? He said this one is of the Order of Erit Agge: they await the Final Days where all will be called to battle. The training and skills of this one: they are kept silent until then.

I asked did that mean that until that time he would let himself be robbed in the street? He said this one would clarify: the item is of value. The discipline of the Erit Agge is of greater value.

I said that if he wouldn't fight was there any chance that he could talk these thieves into returning his item. He said this one addresses the three thieves: what happens? The requests of this one are met with scorn: the three will not return the item.

I suggested that I go get the item back for him. He said this one must ask: would I bring violence to the three that have robbed this one?

I said that I would not if I could help it. He said this one fears that a message absent of violence will not be understood. This one is not opposed to my trying.

I asked what is the item he had lost? He said that the item is this: a rope of black and red prayer beads worn around the neck.

I said that I'd try to find the necklace and asked if he knew where the three thugs were. He said this one knows where the angry words were traded and the item lost: by the bar that burns inside? The three were outside the place: dressed in black and red. I confirmed the details of the incident and left.

[Porphiron is the first weapons trainer you will find in the Hive. He can train you up to three slots in any given weapon. Once you complete his quest you can train with him. The next trainer won't come along until you get to the Lower Ward, much later in the game.]

There are good weapons in each of the categories, so choosing which weapons to specialize in is a matter of taste rather than necessity. Some of the weapons will even let you choose what type they are. If you're going to be a mage, however, you will need to go heavy on edge weapons since that is the only class mages can use. I found it hard to pick one class to stick with and chose to scatter my picks instead. I also wanted to keep my options open since I was doing this walkthrough.

I will say that there is a very useful club for thieves available relatively early and the first really bruising weapon is also a club that you can buy from the Dustmen

once you join. Of course, as a mage, all those club proficiency picks are useless. Decisions, decisions.]

Mhult

As I drew near this Collector he nodded a friendly greeting. Since that was unusual for them I gave him greetings. He asked if I'd seen any deaders and said that if I had any questions I should ask.

I asked what he was looking for? He said deaders, of course. Didn't I recognize the robes? I said no.

He said these were Collectors robes. Any poor sod wearing these is looking for deaders to sell at the Mortuary. I asked if the Collectors worked together.

He laughed and said no. They all dress the same, but there are only so many deaders to go around. They band up, usually and the competing bands aren't too friendly with one another.

I asked if there were rival packs of Collectors near here. He said sure as Sigil's round. Most Collectors live in Ragpicker's Square, just north of here through the large gate. It's mostly run by Sharegrave's laddos, now since they fought most of Pharod's boys off.

I asked him to tell me about Sharegrave. He told me Sharegrave was his boss and could be found in the Square.

I asked about Pharod. He said he didn't know much about the man. Sharegrave's men had spent a lot of time fighting Pharod's, but they've all suddenly disappeared along with Pharod. He said they have no idea where he's hiding.

I asked if Pharod had many men left. He said that Pharod must, cause they'd heard his lot's been real successful of late. Finding lots of deaders. Don't know how, either, as they've been having trouble finding corpses lately.

I asked why the Mortuary paid for corpses. He said it keeps the streets cleaner and the Dusties see to it they all get properly buried. I thanked him for his help and left.

The Flophouse

Arlo

Feeling in need of a good kip I went to the Flophouse. Arlo was the landlord. I said hello. He didn't bother looking at me, but continued to explore the joys of picking scabs off of his nose. He asked what I wanted.

I asked if I could rest here. He said I could if I had the jink. He said the only one who stayed for free was Nestor, because no one wants to mess with him.

I asked about Nestor. He said Nestor was the barmy sod in the corner. Arlo wished someone would do them all a favor and get rid of him.

I asked why he didn't get rid of him himself. He said he'd tried and pointed to the bleeding scabs on his nose. I suggested that I get rid of Nestor for him. He said if I can get rid of him, I could stay there for free. I said that was fair enough.

Nestor

He was very disturbed, pacing back and forth and flailing about, muttering and cursing. He didn't seem to notice me. I said greetings.

He whirled about to face me, eyes wide and staring. He said No, it's not you, but soon, yes soon. I asked whom he was talking to. He said you'll come. Yes, you'll come and Nestor will be waiting.

I asked who he was waiting for. He said he'd wait forever if he had to. I asked if he was all right. He said no, he couldn't leave without his fork. I asked about his fork.

He said he couldn't go home without it. Gone. Stolen. I asked who took it. Nestor looked at me for a moment then began rummaging around in his tunic. Eventually he presented what appeared to be a dismembered ear. He spoke to the ear asking it to bring back his fork. Where's a good asylum when you need one?

I suggested that I might be able to help him. He said he would wait until I brought it back, then he'd go home. I said I'd try to find his fork and bid him farewell.

Mar

On the way to One-Ear I met Mar. He was standing next to the Flophouse where there were several dead Lim-Lims. Mar was nothing if not malodorous. He actually made me homesick for Reekwind. He waved to me frantically to come talk to him. Against my nose's better judgment I approached him to see what he had to say.

He thanked me for stopping and said that his name was Mar. He said he had a favor to ask. I said I was listening.

He said it was a matter of life or death. He was supposed to deliver this box, but had twisted his leg. So would I help him out by delivering the box for him? I said that I would.

He took a small box out from his cloths and handed it to me. There was a shimmer as we both touched it. I asked what now. He said that I needed to deliver it to Ku'atraa, who could usually be found somewhere down in the southeastern section of the Hive. And whatever happens DON'T OPEN THE BOX! And don't leave the Hive with the box. I said I'd return when I'd delivered it.

[Don't open the box. You'll be sorry. As you've probably suspected, there's something really nasty inside the box just waiting to get out and chew on anyone nearby. You'll get a lot more experience wagging the silly box around to the end of the quest.]

Three more thugs died attacking us.

One-Ear

One-Ear was his usual, charming self. I asked how he lost that ear. He asked me to repeat myself. I said I thought he'd lost it while robbing an old man. He said he didn't know what I was talking about and threatened me some more. Not even original threats, either. Sad, really.

I gave him a chance to return the fork, which is more than he deserved. Fortunately he refused all appeals to reason so I killed him. Nice stiletto. I'll have to soak it to let his slime rinse off.

Flophouse

Nestor

Went back to Nestor and gave him the fork. He started to leave and then turned, handing me the severed ear. Charming. However, looking closer I noticed an earring was still attached. **(500, Obsidian Earring)**

Arlo

He was happy to see the last of Nestor and said I could set up kip there anytime. **(500)**

At this point I was so loaded down I thought I'd go to Market and unload all this stuff.

SW Hive

Damn! That abishai is still after me. Ow, that hurt. Stopped long enough to eat a little and sell off some of my loot. I think I'll go off those three thugs at the entrance of the Smoldering corpse and have another look at the patrons. Besides, I need to rest up after getting munched on.

SE Hive

Entering the southeast quarter we were met by a half-dozen thugs who quickly went the way of the others.

[When you see the circle under an opponent turn yellow instead of red that means his morale has broken and he is fleeing. You can leave him alone to

attack others or continue to pursue him. I find it annoying to have to track them down after a fight so I generally pursue unless the opposition is tough.]

Jhelai

South of the Corpse I stumbled into Jhelai. I said that if he was Jhelai Craddock needed him back at the marketplace. (250) His eyes went wide and he told me to tell Craddock he can pike off and a further stream of invective I'm sure Craddock would just be dying to hear. I said I'd tell him from a distance.

Smoldering Corpse

Mochai

I saw a Dustie looking very out of place in the western part of the bar. She asked me to come over. She seemed awfully animated to be a Dustie. I went up to her.

She asked me to buy her a drink. Hmmm ... a very different sort of Dustie indeed. I said that she wasn't really a Dustman. She looked around and seemed to sober up, asking why I said that.

I said she didn't act like a Dustie. She hastened to explain that she just found these robes in the street and she didn't have enough money to get good clothes and she heard there was a Dustman thief in the southwest part of the Hive and please don't hurt her.

I said I wasn't planning on it. I asked who she was. She said she was Mochai and is just a person. She didn't have any other information, so I left her table.

Ilquix

[While Ilquix will talk about teaching you magic, the real tutor to start you on your path to being a mage is Mebbeth in Ragpicker's Square. Ilquix will give you additional lessons once you have more experience.]

When you are presented with something like Ilquix's views of Chaos and Law and asked to make a choice be sure you make a choice you and your character can live with. Whatever you answer will push you towards one of the alignments. Those trying to play Lawful Good should certainly disagree with the old boy.

About alignment, don't try to be a Munchkin and play Lawful Good just because it will let you use a particular weapon and the Tears that raise your constitution by one. You'll have much more fun if you play the way YOU want to play the character.]

Ilquix was pacing back and forth near the bar. He greeted me, gave me his name and asked if he could be of assistance. I asked who he was. He was a long-winded cuss, but from what I could gather he would teach me what he knew of the Art at some future time, perhaps when I have more experience.

When I asked about the patrons of the Corpse he pointed out the barkeep, Barkis and O. I asked why he despised the creatures of law. He said that his background was in the chaotic side of the Great Ring and he finds Chaos pleasantly agreeable. I said that I very much agree.

Barkis

The fellow greeted me in an annoyed tone and asked what I wanted this time. I asked why he said me again. He said yeah, me again. He said I was in here about 15 years ago, but all bubbled up, smashed the place and left a pile of coin that wasn't enough to pay for the damages. So I also gave him my eyeball. NOT one of my more brilliant incarnations, obviously

I said that 500 was ridiculous and he lowered it to 300. Since I was still short I said forget it and talked to him of other matters. I asked him about the patrons and he pointed out Candrian the Planeswalker, Ebb Creakknees, the fiends Aethelgrin and Tegar'in, Ilquix, some Mercykillers and Dak'kon. Then he asked if I wanted to earn some free bub.

I said yes. Barkis said that there was someone over against the far wall who's been trying to work up her courage to slip out without covering her tab. He said if I can see that she pays he'd give me free bub for life. I said I'd do it and let him know when I was done.

O

On the way to deal with Mochai I talked to O. He knows me. A lot of talk, but I'm not sure I'm any the wiser for it.

I asked this curious being to tell me about himself. He said he was O, but when he said the single letter of his name there were echoes as if from the other planes of existence. I asked what he was. He said O was his name. It is the name of a portion of eternity. He is a letter in the divine alphabet. Understanding him leads to understanding existence.

I asked what that meant. He said that the divine alphabet is writ in the language of everything that exists. He, along with his brothers/sisters reach across all that is, was or ever shall be. Doesn't think much of himself, does he?

I said that means you know all the secrets of existence. He said that he knew parts of many of them; with his brothers/sisters combined they are language and power. I said are you saying you don't know the secrets of existence? He said he did not say that. A letter is powerful even on its own. He wanted to show me. He opened his mouth. Wider, still wider ... the mask of his face tore revealing a hint of eternity. I was lost in it. Eventually, I returned to my senses, but O vanished. I felt ... different as if my horizons had expanded. **(+1 wisdom)**

Dak'kon

Next to O, sitting at a table was Dak'kon. I gave him greetings. He looked through me with eyes like polished coal. I asked if he was all right. After a moment he greeted me in return with a somber voice like the wind through a great oak.

He said that my eyes had the weight of one who has traveled far. I said he could say that. He said he was known as Dak'kon. He said I was not known to him.

I said I did not know myself. He said that was for the best. He said he would know why I'd come to this city. I said I was looking for answers.

I asked about the city. He told me it was called Sigil, but among the People it is known as the city that does not know itself. I asked what he meant by that. He said that the city exists, but it does not know itself and thus is flawed.

I said that he spoke as if the city is alive. He said that it may not be aware and know itself, still it lives. I asked why he said the city did not know itself. He said that the city exists in opposition to itself. It seeks to be everywhere at once, yet it has set itself apart from the planes. In not knowing itself it is flawed.

I posed to him a question containing the truth of what I felt. I said what if the city is not flawed? What if its contradictions are strengths? He said to my question a question: what if the city is flawed and I see its contradictions all around me?

Again speaking the truth I said to his question a question: you claim this city's existence is flawed. He claimed this city's existence is flawed. I said he had accepted that rather than explore the possibility that something greater may exist. That suggested he was flawed and that he did not search for knowledge, but only for a convenient answer.

He fell silent at this. He said there was no knowing the answer to the questions we have asked. I said that I would maintain that we know ourselves by the questions we ask and the ones we do not. If we cease asking questions and accept only what we can perceive ... (500)

Dak'kon continued, saying then we will cease to know ourselves. He said such words had been spoken before. He had heard them and knew them.

I asked where. He said the words were his. Once he knew them and knew their meaning. He had forgotten them until I spoke. He wanted to travel with me. I accepted.

Mochai

I told her it was time to settle up. She asked what I was going to do? I asked her again to pay up. She said that she couldn't afford it. Could I spot her just ten percent? She said she'd give it to him and Barkis would know she'd pay the rest.

I asked how much she needed. She said she needed about a hundred coins. I asked if she could think of some other way. She said I could always kill her.

Sigh, I must be getting soft. I said I'd lend her the money and she should go pay up.

She thanked me, after weighing her chances at making a brake for it. I told her not to mention it or leave before she pays up.

Barkis

I told him he wouldn't have any more trouble with Mochai. (1000) He told me I had full bar privileges for free. I said that must have been some tab. He said I had no idea. After having a few drinks I went off to explore the rest of the bar while I could still walk upright.

Mercykiller

I walked up to their table and said hello. He just sat there. I said if that's how he felt about it, farewell and went to the next one.

Caleb

This one was young and obviously a trainee. He said he was Caleb and that he was here with Tarner and Ilsidon to catch his first criminal.

He said that they believe that Justice is the most important thing in existence and that without justice there is no meaning. He said if I wanted to know more I should talk to one of the recruiters.

I asked what he was doing. He said that as a new Mercykiller he was supposed to bring a criminal to justice to show he could handle the field work. I thanked him for his time and left him to his work.

Turner

Clearly Turner was a seasoned veteran. He had the look. He paused for a moment as he evaluated me, as if I jogged his memory. I asked him if he recognized me. He said that he thought he did, but those pictures are centuries out of date and the suspect would be dead by now. If I was the fellow he was thinking of he thought I'd already served my sentence by means of pain.

I asked what he could tell me about this suspect. He said the suspect was a particularly brutal criminal from what he understood. Immense strength and great anger. He was surrounded by a Red Death patrol, escaped through a portal and hadn't been seen since. He said if you took away the scars I might be related to him.

After we talked about his friends and mission I left.

Kiarus Thorntongue

As we passed by two patrons near the table the Abishai were at I heard them talking about Sigil so I stopped and greeted them. The woman was sharp, almost rude and asked if we needed something.

I asked what she and her friend had just said about Sigil. She said that he wasn't her friend; he was her cousin. She said that he was just telling her that this wasn't the center of the multiverse, despite it being located smack in the middle of the Outlands.

I said that was an interesting perspective, but both views might have elements of truth. She said that perhaps I was correct, but such relativism was often beyond her. Either a place is important or it is not.

I asked about Ignus. She was well informed and told me his story. When I asked how she knew so much about the place she said that the uncle she and her cousin Cielan share is a wizard who makes his home here. He brings his relatives here on occasion to show them the delights and horrors of the multiverse.

When I asked who she was she said that she was from the Prime. I asked what that was and she said it was the Prime Material Plane.

Cilaen Irontoes

When I asked about Pharod he said that he didn't know much as this wasn't his Ward. I asked what Ward his was and he said that he lives in the Lady's Ward with his uncle. He certainly thought he was better than anyone here, saying he was slumming.

He also expressed a distinct lack of affection for his cousin when I asked what they had been talking about. He also expressed complete disdain for her view that Sigil was the center of the multiverse saying it was overlooked and unimportant, just as humans were.

Alais

I had noted a trim, muscular man dressed in subdued clothing moving about the bar. When I approached, he asked what I wanted. I asked who he was. He said he was Alais, a warrior of renown. Surely I had heard of him. I said no.

He asked if it could truly be that none in this town have heard of his exploits? He would have to prove himself again. I asked what world he was from. He said he was from the city of Aliburn; surely I'd heard of that?

I asked how he'd gotten here. He said he was chasing his old foe Tir Tanelel who had opened a doorway and hulled himself through it. Before Tanelel could flee Alais through himself after him and found himself here.

I said that I got it; he was one of the clueless. He took offense at that, so I apologized. Apparently, apologies were unknown where he came from. When he repeated my words I said that was what I had said.

Then he supposed as a point of honor he must accept my apology. In return he offered his apology as well. I asked what he could tell me of this place. He said that he did not know.

I asked if he could tell me anything about the patrons. He said he had only met Ebb who had been telling him of the city and the plains. I said Ebb meant Planes, as in planes of existence. **(250)**

A look of confusion passed across his face. He said that he understood. What Ebb had said was starting to make sense. He excused himself to think it all over.

Candrian

[He's almost invisible. If you look closely you will see him talking to Ebb, but in the dim light of the Corpse he's easy to miss.]

I saw him talking to Ebb so I walked over and introduced myself. Hard to do when you don't have a name. I told him about Ingress and asked if he could take her home. He said that he knew of the portal I spoke of and said he would. He said I should go tell her to await his arrival, then come back here and he would tell me if he was successful or not.

We talked a long time about the Planes and I found out more about the Blood War. Bunch of fiends playing king of the hill, sounds like. We also had converse about the boundary Planes and I heard of his recent journey to Limbo.

We talked more about his trip when I asked him about what he was doing and I took extensive notes. He was also kind enough to give me the Negative Token.

I decided to end the existence of those starved dog knaves. Unfortunately, I hadn't healed enough and they killed me. It didn't help that Dak'kon and Morte were busy watching some harlot ply her wares.

NE Hive

After death I looked up Baen the Sender and got my reward. (500) Then I went to Angyar's house for a kip, as the boys were looking a bit fagged.

I went to seek out Ingress, long as I was there and told her I found someone to help her.

I then turned south to give the box to Ku'atraa.

SE Hive

Ku'atraa

Ku'atraa was in his warehouse to the west of the Corpse. On my way we were attacked by 5 thugs, who fared no better than the others.

He was terrified when he saw what I had in my hands and insisted that I take the box to Brasken in the southwest quarter of the Hive as he ran screaming from the building. (250)

When I came out, three thugs jumped us. Ow. If it weren't for the loot, they'd be a real nuisance.

Then I saw a Gith and decided to talk to him. He ignored me and chatted up Dak'kon. Then he spoke to me and told me general things about the planes and the city. He didn't know anything about Pharod or my Journal.

SW Hive

So I went to the southwest portion of the Hive. Damn, that Abishai is still hunting me. I was able to elude him and made my way to Brasken's place in the west.

Brasken

He, at least, knew something of the box, but told me to seek Shilandra who lives in the northwest quarter of the Hive. (250) I am beginning to think this is one giant practical joke.

I finally went to Ragpicker's Square.

Ragpicker's Square

[After you train with Ratbone you can switch to a thief any time by talking to Annah once she is in the party. I chose to stay a thief for quite a while, but after training with Ratbone you could switch back to being a warrior by talking to Dak'kon.]

Ratbone

Just outside of Sharegrave's place in the southeast of the Square I met Ratbone. He seemed to be an experienced thief so I asked if I could train with him. He accepted. At the end of the training I felt I had a reasonable grasp of the trade. **(3125)**

Sharegrave

He's a surly sort. I talked to him about Pharod and he was curious as to how Pharod is coming up with all those bodies. I offered to find out and he said he'd pay me 100 commons, and then gave me directions.

Yellow-Fingers

This Collector seemed to wander around the Square. Wanted Morte, claimed Morte was HIS skull. After asking for proof and being rebuffed, I offered to buy Morte. Well, they both got into it then. I told him to get lost. When I talked to him later he did have some information about someone called Mebbeth and Pharod, but I don't think it was worth the money. After I told him it wasn't his skull and bid farewell he tried to pick my pocket. I watched what he did. **(200)** Then I grabbed his hand. He asked what I was doing. I said he robbed me, so now I was going to kill him. And did so.

Marrow-Fiend

North of Sharegrave's I found a dismal fellow called Marrow-Fiend. I had to give him a bite of me before he'd let me have the ring on the finger around his neck. The ring was worth it, though. **(Mempa's Biting Ring)** I had to replace my

finger with the one wearing the ring in order to wear it. The things you have to do.

Nodd

Nodd wanders about in the southern portion of the Square.

He was an addled sort and didn't seem to know much about the area, but as I went to leave he told me about his sister Amarysse. Asked if I would seek her out and tell her he worried about her. I said that I would.

Mebbeth.

East of Sharegrave's place is Mebbeth's hut. I introduced myself as Adahn. She has quite a stock of cures in her shop. She was kind enough to let me rest and heal me before I left. She's also offered to train me in the magical arts if I'd run an errand for her. I agreed. When she asked why I wanted to know I told her the truth; that I might need these skills to solve the riddle of who I am. She gave me a seed and told me to go to the Market.

NE Hive

I decided to run down the next owner of the box, Shilandra, since I'm nearby.

I also stopped to tell Sev'Tai that I'd fulfilled her quest. **(250)**

Shilandra

Shilandra lived in a small house in the northeast corner of the northeast quarter of the Hive. After a long discussion with Shilandra it seems that the best thing is to take the box to a cathedral in the Alley of Dangerous Angles. (250)

When we came out three more thugs decided they'd had enough of life and we obliged them.

Then we went back to market in the SW Hive to get supplies for Mebbeth and to look up Craddock again and give him news of Jhelai.

SW Hive

Talked to the fruit merchant in the northwest of the Market about the seed Mebbeth gave me. (500) He said he couldn't help. He said I need a gardener, though he had no idea where to find one in the Hive. Mourn for Trees immediately came to mind. He was just the man.

Craddock

Craddock was just THRILLED to hear about Jhelai. When I told him what Jhelai said he turned bright red and he let loose a blistering stream of curses. (500) Morte listened admiringly and picked up some new weapons for his arsenal. I offered to take Jhelai's place. After a moment he agreed. I got on famously and earned 30 coppers.

SE Hive

Back near the Corpse I found the 3 thugs who stole the necklace on the west side of the Corpse. They were wearing more red and silver than black. After a bit of a fight they died. Should have given me back the necklace.

While I was there I stopped in to the Smoldering to see Candrian. He had a present for me from Ingress. Dancing teeth, of all things. Now what will I do with...? Oh Morte, I've got something for you. **(750)**

NW Hive

I went to the NW Hive to see Porphiron. He didn't seem upset that I had to kill the thugs. Evidence of a flexible mind, I suppose. **(1000)** Since he seemed adept I asked if he would train me. He assented. He was willing to teach me proficiency in different weapons.

SW Hive

Giscorl

While in the southwest quarter of the Hive I saw Giscorl. There was something wrong with his hands, but he wouldn't tell me what happened.

SE Hive

Found Mourns for Trees. I told him I wanted Dak'kon to help him. Dak'kon agreed to also care for the trees.

He had never seen such a seed. He said that unless we could get it to grow we're stuck. I asked if we wanted it to grow enough was it possible? He said perhaps... if you cared enough to see it grow.

I asked what he meant. He said I should focus on the seed. By the Lady, it grew! **(500)**

OW! The thing grew in me. I'll have to run to Mebbeth and get it off of me.

I asked how the trees were doing. (500) He said they're doing better.

Amarysse

While I was in the Quarter I went south to see Amarysse. She told me Nodd's real name. She made me promise to get a purse full of coppers to him.

Finally it's back to Ragpicker's.

Ragpicker's Square

Nodd

I told Nodd his sister was well and gave him the purse of coppers. Though it goes against my grain, I lied and said she was a servant. (750) It seemed cruel to tell him the truth.

Mebbeth

I told her I'd returned with the herbs she wanted. Maybe she could get this damned bramble-patch off of my wrist? She said if that was so then I should think it off. (500) Then, as she instructed, I thought it into the shape of a picture frame. (750) Why the devil didn't she tell me about the blasted cloths in the first place? Now back to the market. Sigh.

Jarym

The fellow lived in a big hut beside a rat-infested storage shed near Sharegrave's place. He's a wizard and needed a key component for a spell. He wants a ruby. I thought that if I take this fiend book to the cathedral I could get one for him.

Something remarkable, while wandering through the hive I let my Lim-Lim out to play. Some thugs picked that moment to attack me and the Lim-Lim immediately attacked them. I quickly picked it back up and dealt with the thugs.

SW Hive

Giscorl

I found Giscorl again. He got Mebbeth's wash for me. (500)

NW Hive

I took the mess back to Mebbeth. On the way more thugs jumped me. Didn't see anything of that blasted Abishai, though.

Ragpicker's Square

Mebbeth

I returned her wash. (500) At least I'm learning in all this errand running. Now she wants ink from Kossah-Jai. Sheesh, some people. Back to the market.

SW Hive

Kossah-Jai

Of course, Kossah-Jai didn't know anything about ink until I said that Mebbeth was running me in circles, and then she had an idea. She said I should see Meir'am.

Meir'am

I saw Meir'am. She says I need a cup or something to carry the ink.

I found a comely woman merchant just north of Kossah-Jai who had a suitable tankard for sale.

I went and got the ink from Meir'am. Then back to Mebbeth's.

It was amusing dodging that Abishai while shopping. You'd think the fiend would tire of the chase by now. I'm getting better at it. He didn't get a nibble of any of us this time.

Ragpicker's Square

Mebbeth

I gave the ink to Mebbeth. (1000). At last my errands are done. I talked to Mebbeth about the lessons I'd learned while doing her errands and told her I wanted to learn all she had to teach. (2000)

I undertook the training and stumped the teacher at my first lesson. She asked if I am a fiend. I said that I wasn't to my knowledge. I said I didn't really know how I knew what the writing said. I just knew.

She was a bit disappointed that she wouldn't have someone to do the chores, but I said she could still ask. It was the least I could do in return for her teaching me. At the end of her instructions I felt much wiser. (5000)

She gave me several items to help in my practice of the Art and then shooed me off. She said I had better things to do than to hang around Old Mebbeth. I said that she wasn't so old.

Afterwards I copied the spells into my book and rested to memorize a few. At last I found out what that triangular earring was good for. Glad I didn't spend money on having it identified.

Then I talked to Dak'kon about the Art and asked to know the way of Zerthimon. I told him I wished to know of the people and Zerthimon.

Deciding to take up my quest for Pharod again, I walked into the central part of the Square and found a little round hut that had two lockers and no occupants.

As I explored the Square I found a portal almost smack in the middle of the Square to the east and north of Mebbeth's hut. It looked like a normal door to a medium-sized shack, but when we went to open it the portal appeared.

We went through and found ourselves in what might have been the same shack we saw from the outside, but there didn't seem to be any way to leave, save the portal and it wouldn't open. A brief search of the shack yielded only a piece of junk.

Vlask

After some moments a Collector and two thugs entered. This fellow dressed well, at least, though I didn't care for the reason. Turns out he wanted 100 coppers for a glass bead so we could leave. I didn't care for the price or him.

Turned out he was a mage, but unfortunately for him the narrow confines of the shack let me close in and kill him quickly. The thugs put up a good fight, but went down eventually.

Searching the bodies we found a Charm of Infinite Recall, several knives, a glass bead and the spell Adder's Kiss. In order to leave we had to crush the bead so I nailed the door of the shack shut when we left to keep others from falling into the trap.

I retraced my steps and went west, walking up a long, rickety walkway. Coming to a dead end filled with refuse I waved my junk at it. I don't know why. We emerged on the other side of the Square.

I was greeted by some most inhospitable Collectors. This was going to be fun.

Along the "hall" I came to a shelf that had a few trinkets.

At the first intersection I turned to my right and found a few more friends to play with. After introducing them to death I turned right again and yet again.

Eventually, after another play session I came to a dead end with a crate. The crate had some nice loot in it, but nothing special. Emerging from the dead end I turned right once more so as to keep my bearings.

At yet another dead end I found my toughest fight yet. I had to use several clot charms and even Dak'kon had to use a few.

After the fight I headed north back to the first right turn (it was a left) and followed it making the next right. Saw a villager, but she ran away.

I continued straight until the corridor dead-ended and then went left/east. We met two more groups of thugs. These were tougher than those that roam the Hive. Another dead-end, so we went back to the last easterly/left turn.

Bish

Where we came upon Bish. When he asked who I was, I said I was Adahn. It's as good a name as any and the first that came to mind. Might even BE my name. When he said I wasn't on the reservation list I suggested that perhaps Pharod's confidence in him doesn't extend as far as Bish thinks. **(1200)** Then he let me in the trapdoor.

I decided to back trace before going further and went back to the last turn I hadn't taken to the east.

We had an intense fight with several Collectors and some villagers. From where they came I don't know. We were beat up going into the fight and Dak'kon cast a wonderful spell that conjured several missiles and slew a Collector outright.

We found a portal. I decided to venture through for a moment to see where it went.

[This portal requires some number of Cranium Rat Tails to open. If you dealt with the rats in the building next to Sharegrave's place you will have enough of them.]

We found a medium sized room full of rats that attacked immediately. I thought the fight would be easy, but they cast SPELLS at us! Some ice shards and

magic missiles flew at me. Dak'kon nearly died, but Morte gave him a blood charm just in time.

The fight was worth it, though. As we bound our wounds Morte saw a crate. Opening it I found over 300 coppers, a silver frame, a prickly club, two clot charms and a scroll of Magic Missile. However, there was a trap I missed and my health suffered the consequences.

After searching the room carefully we went back through the portal to the next eastern turn to the north.

It was just another dead-end. Though tired we decided to press on and went back to Bish who let us through the trap door.

Buried Village

Proceeding south we came to a store to the west run by Marta.

When she didn't answer my greeting I watched her for a bit. Feeling playful I threw my voice, pretending to be the corpse she was working on. Had quite a tiff we did. Finally I let her in on the joke and asked her questions about who she was and what she was doing.

I asked her about the "stichies." I asked why she was pulling the teeth out and who told her to strip the corpses. She said Quint and Pharod. Doesn't seem to think much of them.

After a bit I asked her to dig into me for thingies. I suggested she try my intestines. Sure enough she found something, though the pain made me

question my sanity for suggesting it, but the ring she found seems to make it harder to strike me.

After the ordeal I was quite weary and asked if we could rest. She was amenable.

After we rested I asked Marta if I could buy needle and thread from her to stitch up our wounds.

Radine

We continued south and came to a dead end where we found Radine southeast the Village.

When I asked her to tell me about this place she talked about the squiggly number that protects her. Bit of blither if you ask me.

Near Radine, after being jumped by a few thugs that packed a wallop, I found a pile of crates. Off to one side was a crate that must have fallen off the pile. Inside were a silver earring and a tarnished silver bracelet.

We walked into a house. The woman didn't have much to say. In a locker were 5 commons. Apparently they weren't hers.

Found another shack just to the southeast. 20 commons were laying in a drawer and 25 in another.

In another pile of crates I found a bone charm.

Barr

We came to an archway. Walking through, we found several thugs guarding a gate commanded by Barr in the south central area of the Village. Unfortunately the door was locked.

Found 5 coppers in another little hut east of the gate.

In the next shack there were a host of cranium rats feeding on a dead collector.

Uhir

Walking along we came to Uhir northeast of the gate. I asked him why he was bandaged. He said he was injured down below. When I said I might be going down there sometime he asked me to fetch his lucky knife. I asked him what happened to it.

Found another crate with loot in the next pile we came to.

Moving north we found another door guarded by 2 thugs. They didn't seem to mind as we walked through.

Pharod's Court

At last, moving through the building from north to the south then east I came face to face with Pharod. He was not what I expected at all.

On a hunch I asked if the arrangements were all in order. He said they were. So _I_ set this up? It seems we were looking for something in the catacombs.

Blast. He doesn't know where my journal is. All the answers...

We talked of the Mortuary and this place, but when I told his tale he became upset and insisted that I'd lied last time. I again said I would find his bauble.

I lied and said I'd keep his secret when he offered to tell me.

How wonderful! What a scam. He sells the corpses the Dusties bought back to them. Wish I'd thought of it.

All paths lead to the same end.

We took our leave from Pharod and left his court. Then we turned north and found another building on our right.

Quint

In building in northeast of the Village I met Quint. I found some jink in the crate behind him and we negotiated a bit until he let me trade with him.

After we traded I inquired about a job. He wants me to find Gris in the Catacombs.

I bought a fine battle axe from him for the next time I meet that Abishai.

[As I was to find out later, this fine axe is NOT magical, even though it is a +1 weapon.]

Moving on to the west I came to another shack. There were a few coppers in the chest on the back wall.

In another pile of crates I found a pair of fist irons.

Ku'u Yin

In the center I met Ku'u Yin by an old wagon. When I asked him to speak about himself he asked me for aid in reclaiming his name from Radine.

Radine

Radine suggested I give him her name. Does this make sense? Back to Ku'u Yin, I suppose.

Ku'u Yin

He insists the name is his so back to Radine I go.

Radine

She offers me 20 coppers to buy the name from him. I relayed the offer, but Ku'u Yin wasn't selling. Back to Radine.

I suggested that she didn't need his name and number that she could make her own and she assented.

Ku'u Yin was ecstatic. **(2500)** He also gave me the tattoo in gratitude. It protects against chaos.

Then I went into the building behind him.

Ojo

When I asked what he was doing he started massaging his hand so I examined it and then asked him about it.

He clammed up. I turned to go, but came back to him and Morte started in on him. I told Morte to lay off. When I asked him about the villagers he told me Gris is dead. I asked how he knows this and he says the man in the wall told him.

Any time I ask him about the man in the wall he clams up.

After some consideration, I decided to go to Poriphiron and receive training in clubs and axes and before going to the mausoleum.

NW Hive

We then went to the nearby flophouse to rest so that Dak'kon and Morte could recover strength.

When we woke I suggested we look in at the tattoo parlor and survey their stock now that we had more funds available.

I picked out tattoos of the Soul and Warding. It cost us dearly, but our journey will be the easier for it.

I let Lim-Lim out for play. He really is a satisfying little beast, but he needs a name. I think I will call him ... Spot.

Mausoleum

[Any time I am giving compass directions such as north, east and so forth north is always towards the top of the screen, east is to the right, west to the left and

south is towards the bottom of the screen. Thus southeast would towards the lower right-hand corner of the screen.

On the other hand, when I say that I turned left or right, that is always from the perspective of my character. So, for example, if The Nameless One was facing the top of the screen and turned right he would also be turning east.]

We entered the Mausoleum once more and returned to where I died. Morte let out a tremendous stream of profanity at the wizard while Dak'kon cast anger at him. I closed to show him the power of my new axe.

He cast cloud of Shadows and everything turned beige. That availed him nothing, however and with only 2 blows of my axe he died. But as he died he said I hadn't seen the last of him. We were still left with several skeletons to deal with, but without his spells to help them they were quickly dealt with.

Searching where his body had been I found a spell: Ice Knife and a bracelet that gave off magical emanations and a copper earring.

Searching the room we found a loose plate in the floor that held a skull, of all things. On what served as his desk we found Strahan's Diary, a powerful dagger that pulses with magic and two more spells: Strength and Chromatic Orb. A good haul, all told.

We left the room to explore the rest of the mausoleum and met the guardian spirit once more. **(2000)** On leveling I spent the point on intelligence again.

We paused a moment to catch our breaths and I perused the diary. Apparently, he was looking for ME, wanting my blood for some ritual. Too bad I cannot return the favor.

We then moved east, to the other arm of the T. There was another loose floor plate. In the crack was a heart charm.

It seems this section was full of loose plates. Just a bit up the passage was another with some bandages. This was a long, turning passage that eventually went on with no offshoots.

After we had walked some ways the passage turned gently to the west and we found another loose plate. A few coppers had fallen into the crack.

Moving on we found another section where the floor had suffered. Several plates were bent backwards. Our haul consisted of a few bandages, a Clot Charm and a rag. On the floor near one of the graves was a leg bone that had been fashioned into a crude club. I decided to keep it, for now.

The passage turned back on itself and we were soon at the entrance once again. Moving east from the entrance we took the second right, which we had not explored before.

We moved south past a passage to the left. In another grave we found a few commons. We recognized the next intersection as one we had taken before and went back to the eastern passage we had skipped. The passage turned south and ended in a T. We turned right to be sure that way led back to the entrance; which it did.

Then we took the other side of the T, moving east. We came to another section that curved from south to east and turned south (right) coming to another section where the graves had been disturbed we found a couple of bandages and another bone club.

The winding passage turned south again and met another. We knew the hallway to the west so we ventured east. That hallway turned north and we continued, meeting nothing and no one, though another magical ball struck Morte. For some reason, he always seems to be the target.

After a bit there was an opening to the west, but that led back to places we had already been and we continued north. At this intersection were more disturbed graves, holding more rags and a Finger Bone Charm. A bit further along, in another grave we found a bandage then the passage ended in a steep drop-off into nothing.

Looking at our map we realized that we had explored the entire place and left to collect our thanks.

It was night when we emerged onto the street once more, so we made our way to the Gathering Dust.

Gathering Dust Bar

Sere the Skeptic

When I talked to Sere about not being a corpse from a crypt she mentioned Hamrys from the Lower Ward. I asked about his father. We then went to the barrel where we had put some loot. It was still there. I suppose animated corpses don't have larcenous tendencies.

Emoric

I spoke with Emeric about joining the Dustmen. I was truthful about my doubts, but he accepted me anyway and sent me to Norochj. I lied to him about Pharod and he believed me. (2500) I collected 300 commons for my trouble.

Norochj

Talking to Norochj, I got 100 coppers for my troubles at the Mausoleum. (1000) Then spoke to him about becoming a Dustie. He told me of a thief posing as a Dustman. I said I would track him down.

We went to Angyar's so Dak'kon and I could replenish our spells.

Thinking to talk to Mortai again about the Dustman thief we went to the Corpse.

SE Hive

Smoldering Corpse

Barkis

Now that we were flush with funds I went to Barkis and talked him down to 300 for my eye. Popping the disgusting thing back in was extremely painful, (1000) but many memories returned. I also regained some of my puissant skills.

In my efforts to find Mortai I tried talking to the Abishai. They knew me and were actually FRIENDLY. I thought my eye would fall out in surprise.

Tegar'in and Aethelgrin

At a table in the northeast corner of the bar I talked to Tegar'in and Aethelgrein. They nattered on and on about who they were and what they were doing, but eventually I asked them to tell me more about fiends and they spoke of the Blood War. They protested that the chaotic tanar'ri were at fault for the whole thing. I asked them what the difference was. They said (and it was hard keeping a straight face, I can tell you) that they (the baatezu) represent law an order. They are SO misunderstood. Anything the baatezu do, they do to prevent the forces of chaos from overwhelming the planes. Personally, I think these two have a future in advertising.

As always, I asked about my journal. Tegar'in advised against keeping one and when I asked why he rattled on about how it is easy to make mistakes and write a "true" word (whatever that means) and easier still to for someone you trust, and here he shot a look at Aethelgrin, to use that word against you. This must be what got them kicked out or on the lamb.

I said I had some other questions, but Morte broke in and voiced his suspicions to me. He maintained that they couldn't be on furlough, as they claimed. That they want something and that I should tread carefully. Perhaps I should suggest they join the Dusties. I could wish them on each other.

We were about to take our leave when Aethelgrin asked about Morte. I shrugged them off and left.

I was about to leave the bar when I noticed a door in the back next to Barskin that I hadn't seen previously. It opened to another room with a barred door. Giving up on that project for now we left.

Jhelai

I saw Jhelai again and warned him that Craddock was looking to kill him. He thanked me for the warning.

Drunken Harlot

Walking to the northwest I saw a harlot who seemed the worse for her liquor. She had nothing of import to say, but as I left I noticed she'd picked my pocket. I baited her into doing it again and picked up a few tricks. **(1250)**.

When I grabbed her hand she kept struggling and screamed. It became obvious her inebriation was a sham. She wouldn't shut up so I broke her neck. A memory stirred, but refused to surface, though I felt a little more knowledge seep into me. **(250)**

She had only a few possessions: some coppers, two knives and a Clot Charm.

SW Hive

We went now in search of Ash-Mantle to fulfill Norochj's request.

Ash-Mantle

I found him east of the Office of Vermin. Unlike most, this Dustman acted confused and glanced about as if he were looking for something. When he saw us he waved to attract our attention. He thanked us for hearing him and said that he was known as Ash-Mantle, one of the Dustman sect. He was wondering if I could direct him to a bar those of his sect frequent.

I told him it was over by the Mortuary. If he oriented himself by the Mortuary front gate, then walk directly southwest he couldn't miss it. He smiled and thanked us. I took the opportunity to ask him some questions also.

I asked him about his order. He said that Dustmen recognize this life for what it is: an opportunity to experience our passions before the next life. We sift through our lives for meaning before the next. That sounded a bit out of line with what other had told me. He also seemed to know this quarter of the Hive very well, which seemed at odds with his ignorance of other areas of the Hive, but I left it alone for now.

Just as I was about to turn away I had a feeling something was amiss. I glanced at Ash-Mantle just in time to see him tucking something into his sleeves—something of mine. I baited him into picking my pocket again to observe his technique. **(1250)**

I engaged him in light conversation and observed his movements. He used his voluminous robes and frequent bowing to mask what he was up to. Just as he reached into my purse again I grabbed his hand.

He said if I didn't let go he'd call the guards. I said I would after he answered some questions. He asked what gave him away. I said that his ignorance of the common Dustmen philosophies had tipped me off. I suggested that he should do some research before trying to run a con on someone smarter than himself.

I asked what he was doing in the Dustie getup. He said that nobody suspects a Dustman. I told him to give me everything he had or I'd kill him. It was the truth; I hadn't had my morning cup yet.

He gave me the thief's old saw of saying that I was his first mark of the day. I said he wasn't just playing dumb, now he was being dumb. I demanded that he

give me what he had or the Collectors will have new business. Unfortunately, he chose to attack me. Unfortunately for him, that is. He had a few coppers and a knife.

Almost as soon as we finished dealing with Ash-Mantle, that blasted Abishai showed up again and bit Dak'kon. Since we now had magics of our own we decided to stand and fight. Dak'kon retreated and cast Anger while Morte taunted the fiend mercilessly. While the fiend chased Morte I ran after it, stabbing it repeatedly with the dagger I found after Strahan disappeared. After a tremendous fight, during which we all received serious wounds, the fiend's morale failed and he ran. Cornering him we stabbed and bit (Morte's teeth could now be made magical) until he died. Curiously for such a tough opponent, he only had a Rat Tail Charm on him.

[The teeth you get from Ingress are very flexible. As Morte rises in level they will gain new powers. At the beginning they can do crushing or piercing damage. Later on they can be made magical and gain the +1 to hit and damage. To change their properties, use the teeth, then talk to them.]

It was with a great sense of satisfaction that we went back to the Gathering Dust to claim our reward.

NE Hive

Norochj

Back at the Dust I told Norochj of the demise of Ash-Mantle. It seemed to ease him and he paid us 100 commons. **(750)**

Emoric

Talking to Emeric I told him I was still not certain that my beliefs were those of the Dustmen, and that that I would like to see more. He sent me to see Awaiting-Death. Since I had already spoken with the man I told him of our conversation. Emeric asked my opinion and I said that I thought perhaps in time Awaiting would be a Dustman. (250) I was told to talk to Sere. I told him I'd also spoken to her. I said that her fear had made her blame the Dustmen and that I told her that her fear and had defined her. She is not a Dustman.

When I said I wished to continue in my knowledge of the Dustmen I was told of Suego. I said he was at the Mortuary, but Emeric said that Suego was there no longer. I said I would go seek him out.

We then rested at Angyar's before venturing into the Mortuary to look for Suego.

We spoke to the Dustman Gate Guard and told him we were here to pay our respects to Deonora and he allowed us entry.

A guard approached and I snapped his neck as he leaned in to listen to me. (275)

I found no one to help me locate Suego, not even Dhall, though Dhall did seem concerned when I told him I had spoken to Deonora.

We left the Mortuary and returned to the Buried Village.

Buried Village

Ratbone

Before entering the Village I stopped to see Ratbone. I paid him the money to become a thief once more. I thought my nettle club would come in handy against the undead.

Quint

We stopped by Quint's shop to sell off some loot. While there I saw a fancy eyeball and while Quint's back was turned I palmed it.

Barr

Barr let us through the gate without complaint.

Weeping Stone

Just to the left of where we entered a crypt had been overlooked. It contained a few coppers and a skull. Which I took, but I don't know why.

Walking past the entrance we found another undisturbed grave and collected another skull.

Coming to an intersection we took the left fork. In a chest we found an antler axe among assorted junk and one copper.

When forced to choose again at a T intersection we stayed left. As we entered the next room I could see glimpses of ... something moving. Moments later we were attacked by two ghouls. With a roar they came at us, but were easily slain, if one may use that word for such as they.

Though we searched the room there was nothing in it. To the north was a staircase going up and to the south a door. We chose neither, but instead continued to explore this level, retracing our steps.

We went straight through the T moving southwest. We were set upon by a host of rats who banded together to cast electrical magics at us.

At yet another T we turned left and moved northeast again. Coming into a room we stumbled upon 2 hideous Wererats. My precious club was of little use, though it did cause them some confusion. We were finally able to kill them and move on. I pray their bites are not more than they seem...

We found another door to the northeast, but left it closed, again retracing our movements.

We went west then north, exploring a large, irregularly shaped room facing several rats and zombies.

In another part of the same room were more rats and a new foe: the Lesser Vargouille. There were over a dozen and they each took many blows before succumbing, yet we prevailed.

We continued north through a corridor. As it broadened out we came upon more of the awful, flying Vargouille and killed them, using up precious supplies to heal ourselves.

After the battle we found the claw of some ancient bird and another skull in a crypt.

At the northwest end of the room was another door, so we went back the way we'd come.

When we chose this time we went southwest, turning right. As we went by one of the many stone faces it spoke to us.

He seemed to know something about both my past and future. I asked how he came to be here. As he recounted his sad story I was moved to ask if I could help him.

As the passage turned north we entered a room. I found an urn there with a few coppers. Meeting yet another door we moved back.

The next turn to the southeast led to a room with nothing in it.

After that, a corridor led southeast and we followed it. It led to a place called the Drowned Nations. We decided to go back and visit the crypts we had passed before venturing on and went back to the entrance that was marked The Dismembered Crypt.

Dismembered Crypt

As we walked down the new passage, Morte was assaulted with some sort of projectile. Even as a disembodied skull Morte's luck isn't very good. Walking further I was hit by one.

Then steel spikes sprang from the floor twice as we walked and struck me for serious damage. I suppose Morte isn't the only one whose luck is lacking.

In the central tomb was another skull and leg bone.

Underchamber

When we entered this ghastly chamber a few rats scurried away. On the body of a slain man I found an arm similar to the one in the Mortuary. Perhaps if I stay at this business long enough I'll have sufficient parts to make a new man out of myself.

Many tattoos covered the arm and I resolved to go see Fell about it if we ever left this place.

When we went back upstairs I was struck several more times by the infernal devices even though I was now aware of them.

When we were back in the area of weeping stone we were attacked by yet more Vargouille. Fortunately they were few in number. We moved on to the Crypt of the Embraced.

Crypt of the Embraced

We came to a chamber that stopped our breath with its majesty. Apparently undisturbed for countless centuries, the guilt and gems still decorating the tombs were stunning to behold. As we fully entered the chamber we discovered why. Three fearsome ghouls materialized from portals and attacked. They were much stronger than the ghouls we had met thus far. They almost killed Dak'kon before I realized it. Fortunately, even the undead are confused by my new club giving Dak'kon time to bandage himself before returning to the fray.

They "died" eventually. We were bloody, but alive, which was more than I could say for them.

If these ghouls were stronger they were also possessed of great loot. A Heart Charm, a golden ring and a Bone Dagger, twin to the one in my belt were found on them as well as two more knives of good workmanship and materials.

A surprise met us when we opened the central sarcophagus. At least Gris received a decent burial, though after a brutal death. Unfortunately there was no sign of the Poison Charm, though we searched the chamber thoroughly.

We walked to the other door in this room, which led to the Shattered Crypt.

Shattered Crypt

We were cautious this time and moved around the circumference of the chamber. Crossing some invisible trigger, we were engulfed in a swarm of Vargouille. It was difficult to see or think through the flapping wings and screeching of the beasts. Dak'kon withdrew for a moment to cast his anger at them and Morte cursed, but it soon became a slogging battle of endurance. They eventually went down one by one and many of our healing magics were used up. The slain lay around us in a heap of tattered wings and bodies. Blood and ichor soaked our clothes, but we stood still.

Our fight did not go unrewarded. In a pile of bones we found a good stiletto and a wondrous weapon: the Punch Daggers of Moorin. In a small box we found over 500 coppers, which we took for a good sign.

We discussed things among ourselves and thought it best to return to the Village for more supplies and to sell off much of the loot now weighing us down.

Buried Village

Barr

Should it have surprised us that the gate was locked? Given Barr's attitude, I suppose not. He refused to open it until I offered him 50 of our hard-earned coppers. As he reached for the money I pinned his arm threatening to break it if he didn't let us in. He hurried to open the gate. I told him he'd find himself in 3 different coffins if he tried that again.

Quint

We made for Quint's shop to lighten our load. We stashed a few bits of jewelry in the chest behind him and bought a number of blood charms. Funny thing is, he still was asking about Gris. Then went to see Marta for a rest.

On the way to Marta's, right next to her door I found some loot in a pile of boxes; a few coppers, nothing much.

Returning to the Catacombs we realized that we had not searched one of the crypts and journeyed to the Mosaic Crypt. On the way we met 3 more Vargouille and made short work of them, though they inflicted wounds on each of us.

Mosaic Crypt

Another splendor hidden from the world. The floor of the crypt was inlaid with ornate mosaic tiles. Many years must have been spent in its construction. My thief skills were put to good use. After I inspected the sarcophagus for traps I picked the lock.

Inside were over 200 commons, another skull and an enchanted hammer. It was surprisingly light for such a large weapon, but of no use to me in my current state so I strapped it to my back.

Exploring the rest of the chamber we found that the ceiling in the center of the room dripped some vile liquid. Actually, Morte found it, as usual. Though there was nothing else in the chamber we were struck several times by assorted traps.

[Even though you are told that there is a secret in the Mosaic Crypt there is none. Trust me. Billions of gamers have tried and tried to find it, but it just isn't there.]

We walked back to the entrance to the dead kingdom. Again we were beset by 3 Vargouille, but killed them quickly.

At last we were ready for the Dead...

Dead Nations

[This was what I did the first time. I realized I had made a mistake in fighting the undead, but left the fight in as a heads up and to show that it can be done for the bloodier among us.

If you choose to kill the undead you will miss out on a great deal of experience you can get from the many quests.

Also, before you enter the Nations you should make sure you've bought the spell Friends. When you talk to Stale Mary it is most important that your charisma be 14 or better as that opens an important dialog option. I didn't know this at the time and thus missed out on some good experience.]

Or were we? Over two-dozen of the undead confronted us. Their leader, Hargrimm, called us to submit, but we refused.

It was a mighty battle. Hargrimm threw spell after spell at us before we hacked our way through the horde and slew him. Dak'kon managed to lay the Power of One upon me before he was beset on all sides by the undead. A carpet of bodies covered the floor and still we fought. A second leader, Acaste arrived and he began casting. Once more we hew a path to the vile lich and crushed his bones.

But the undead fought on, having no morale to break. We went through most of the supplies we had brought with us. We slew until we could barely lift our arms and still they stood before us. Always fewer. Their leaders gone, the ghoulish guard mostly gone, the gibbering masses now died quickly, seemingly one at each blow. At last only we stood, bathed in gore.

The floor was covered in bodies and booty. Near Acaste's body Dak'kon found Uhir's knife. Both lichens had been decapitated. Thinking they might prove useful we took their heads with us, though I made Morte carry them. On Hargrimm I found the Dead Nations key.

Ah, but this is only a memory of my past. This time we reluctantly submitted.

Soego

They took us to a room where I was surprised to find Soego. After resting we talked about diverse things. At least, after hearing about Hargrimm's devotion to caring for the undead, we felt better about having submitted.

There is someone or something named the Silent King. Soego has not seen him. Hargrimm won't let him.

In the N corner of his room among some barrels we found a goodly number of bandages. I would have liked to inspect Soego's bed, but with him in the room that proved impossible. Something for later, I suppose.

Leaving by the only door we passed more barrels and crates in the corridor. Three of the crates were locked, but that was quickly dispensed with. There was nothing in the barrels, but the crates held 500 commons and some fine axes.

Since they had locks we placed some of our possessions inside the crates to lighten our load.

Proceeding, we came to a door. Before us was a large room. To the left was a bookshelf with a scroll of Blood Bridge. Exploring further, it became clear that this had once been a chapel. Curiously, the pews were made of iron and looked most uncomfortable.

Skeleton

Leaving by an exit to the south we found a talkative skeleton. Listening to the skeleton rattle on I begin to believe that this place must be the Club Med for the Undead. He makes it sound so inviting to "live" here.

He shared much information about their society and its members. When I asked about the zombies he told me of Stale Mary who cares for zombie kind. She is in a chamber west of where we first entered.

I asked about the ghouls and was told of their leader: Acaste. They serve as guards for the rest.

We talked of the Blighted Ones, some sort of personal guard for Acaste. He mentioned his charges and I asked about that. He called them the silent ones who do nothing but sleep. Thanking him, we took our leave.

Walking left we met some ghouls. Morte suggested it was a bad idea to speak to them. Ignoring him all I got for my efforts was their growls and screeches as we inspected the chests and crates along the wall behind them. In two of the containers, which were locked, we found 3 Bone Charms and a Bone Knife.

Following the passage as it turned south we found more chests and crates to "inspect." Most of them were locked and we soon saw why. Over 300 commons were in one and two Clot Charms were in another.

Puzzled Skeleton

I found a skeleton that seemed to be exercising whatever it used for a brain most forcefully, looking puzzled, if a skeleton can look such. I greeted it and it nodded in return.

I started to ask it some questions, but it told me it couldn't talk now; it had the most frustrating riddle on its mind and it couldn't figure it out.

I asked what the riddle was. It asked if I was going to give it a try and I said yes. It told me it had gotten this riddle from a chortling bone-bag I may find nearby. The riddling skeleton refused to give the answer.

It told me the riddle: Think of words that end in '-GRY.' Angry and hungry are two of them. There are but three words in the Common Tongue ... what is the third word? The word is something that one uses every day. If I had listened carefully, it has already told me what it is.

I said I would have to think on it and said farewell.

In a barrel on the wall opposite the last bunch of crates was a Charcoal Charm.

Hargrimm

Strolling down the left corridor we met Hargrimm and we struck up a conversation. I asked why we were prisoners and if the Silent King could be convinced to let us go. He said perhaps and I asked to speak to him. He said no. I asked why not? No living things are allowed, he said. I protested that we needed his permission to leave. Still the answer was no. Finally I asked what I could do to convince him.

He asked why we were here. I told him of the sphere. He had not seen it. When I said I was seeking it for Pharod he had a strong reaction. I said that I was not of his pack. I said that I must find the sphere for him in return for information, that there was no loyalty between us. He said perhaps we were different.

When asked, he said much about the Silent King, himself, and the other undead, including the shadows. I asked if they had fled to the Planes. He said that Mary had had a vision in which they had all gone to a fortress on the Negative Material Plane.

I asked about that. He called it foolishness and I asked why. He said he couldn't see how anything could exist there.

I asked why he stayed. To look after the quiet ones was his reply. I asked what were the horrors of the catacombs, to which he replied the Living.

He had mentioned Mary several times, so I inquired about her. He said she was the only member of the rotting herd, the zombies, who had a heart. They labor at her guidance.

I mentioned Soego and he told how Soego tries to convince them to die the True Death. Hargrimm thinks that Soego causes great harm by his preaching. It appears that Soego alone may come and go from this place because of the Dead Truce that exists between the Dustmen and the undead.

We spoke of Acaste, the matriarch of the ghouls.

At the end of our conversation it was clear we had changed his view of us. He offered us healing and rest, if we needed it.

Down this left-hand, twisting corridor we passed a chest and a barrel, neither of which had anything.

Passing on we came to a skeleton merchant, of all things, wandering the halls. He had some magicked weapons for sale as well as some most unusual charms and several spells. Having become quite good at one of the thieving arts, at least, I relieved him of several spells and a lovely, enchanted axe.

[If you kill or pick the pocket of the Skeleton Merchant enough times you can get a scroll of Force Missiles.]

Leaving most of our equipment here we went back for what we had left behind so that we could sell what we didn't need.

Going back to the merchant we moved down the right-hand corridor and passed by some barrels. They held nothing of note.

After selling off several axes that had now become redundant we put all but one of the skulls and bones in a chest near where we met the merchant. Marking the location on our map, we walked on.

[In order to beat the Riddling Skeleton you need an intelligence of at least 16. I got mine there by eating a Cranium Rat Charm just before talking to him.]

Riddling Skeleton

This fellow was giggling to itself. I said hello. I said that I understood that it had a difficult riddle.

It asked if I wanted to hear it. I said yes. It repeated the riddle as I'd heard it from the Puzzled Skeleton. I muttered something and the skeleton burst into a fit of derisive laughter. I said all right, what's the answer?

It said not a chance. I asked if it would tell me if I stumped it with a riddle. It abruptly stopped laughing. It said that if this were a challenge that I should know that if I lost or left halfway through that it would never speak to me again. I said very well.

I asked it what was worth more, a pound of one-hundred-common, pure gold coins or a half-pound of two-hundred-common, pure gold coins? It said that was easy. One pound of gold is always worth more than a half pound. I said it was its turn.

It said uncles and brothers have I none, but that man's father is my father's son. Who am I? I said he was his son. (625) He didn't enjoy losing, but said it was my turn.

I said the maker doesn't want it, the buyer does not use it, but user does not see it. What is it? It giggled and said not true. The answer was coffin and it had certainly seen it. I said it was its turn again.

It asked me what five-letter word does even the greatest of mortal sages pronounce wrong? I said wrong. **(1250)** It shook its fist at me and told me to continue.

I said at night they come without being fetched and by day they are lost without being stolen. It said the answer was stars. I said of course and told it to ask away.

It said I never was, am always to be, no one ever saw me, nor will ever see. And yet I am the confidence of all, to live and breathe in this hallowed hall. I said the answer was tomorrow. **(1875)** It said yes, go then.

I asked what is the beginning of eternity, the end of time and space, the beginning of every end and the end of every place? It began to giggle and then stopped.

I said let's have its answer. The skeleton hung its head and said it didn't know. **(2500)**

I told it to give me its first riddle's answer and I would give it mine. It nodded and said the answer was tongue. The first two sentences are unrelated, only there to trick the hearer. Remember: there are three words in "the Common Tongue." The third word is tongue. It asked for my answer.

I said not a chance, not a chance and said farewell. It said that was amusing. So, what was the answer? I laughed and walked away.

It called me to wait and asked if I would promise not to tell anyone else the answer. I asked why shouldn't I tell?

It said because it enjoyed the idea of them standing about, trying to puzzle it out for all eternity. Thinking, "sauce for the goose," I refused to promise and bid goodbye.

Puzzled Skeleton

I returned to the Puzzled Skeleton to tell him the answer. It was incredulous until I explained it. Then was pleased and thanked me.

Acaste

We went south through an arch and met Acaste, who had hair nearly down to her feet. She took a tone with me, but I kept my peace for the moment. I told her I was Adahn when she asked my name. She was content for the moment to answer our questions, but I thought it was only a matter of time before her hunger would drive her to attack.

Her replies were very different from Hargrimm's, though I asked the same questions. She has developed a taste for rats, it seems. She calls the living the Blooded Ones. Her tone sent chills through me, like a grave speaking.

Certainly she hates Hargrimm. If she knew what I have begun to suspect ... there'd be a hot time in the old crypts, yes indeed.

When I ask of Soego I feel something click into place in my mind. She says he smells like blooded rat. I ask her about this, she says him good to eat, anyway. I asked what a blooded rat was.

As she told me of the struggle between the ghouls and the rats, a scene formed before my mind of her "flock" and the "blooded rats;" eaters and eaten, changing by turns. Perhaps the True Death is to be preferred to the memories I will have of this place.

And so we returned to the entrance, which is locked and refuses to budge. A door to the southwest also resists our best efforts.

An archway led out of the room to the northeast and we took it. We must be near the throne as two huge Royal Guard skeletons roared at us as we entered, blocking a door. They were similar in size, arms, and armor to those I saw guarding the Mortuary. Was it only 13 days ago?

I did ask one of the guards who he was and received a most impressive answer. It is obvious we need a key to leave or see the Silent King.

On the way out we saw a ghoul just outside the guardroom. He had a terrible, fresh wound to his eye, but what kept our attention was a knife slipped into his waistband. It was carved and a U was plainly visible.

I asked if I could have it. He paused in thought (I could see the wheels turning, through his eye socket) then asked for meat. I offered him several rat-tails I had collected, but not turned in. He snatched them and gave us the knife. I learned something from the exchange. (600) I'm sure this would do us some good, if we ever get out of here.

We walked back and left the entrance hall the way we came, through set of arches in the northwest. These halls were filled with various members of the undead and I considered our chances small if we had to fight our way through.

Moving left and west we passed through an arch and found a trapdoor, but it was rusted shut.

Stale Mary

At the end of the chamber we found Stale Mary. I tried to communicate, but it was impossible to understand her.

We left the room moving northwest and passed through a corridor divided by arches. In a chest on the north wall were two rusty daggers. Just what we needed. The passage ended in a rock-fall.

Our spirits sank as we consulted our map and knew we had covered the entire "city" and found no way of escape. We plodded back to seek out Hargrimm. It was all we could think of to do. The fate before us didn't bear contemplation.

[Stale Mary is a very important figure in this section of the game. If your charisma is high enough she will open a portal to the Silent King, which will eventually let you out and also let you complete a quest in the Warrens of Thought.]

She will also give you the ability to talk to the true dead, those who are not animated. Remember all those skeletons and corpses you could click on in the Weeping Catacombs? Once you can talk to Mary you can go back and talk to them.]

Hargrimm

Finding Hargrimm, I asked about Stale Mary once more. I asked how he could understand her. He said that one needed to learn how to listen, so we made our way back to Mary.

Stale Mary

I told her what Hargrimm had said and she reached out to touch me. Steeling myself, I let her. I heard her slurred speech, but also her meaning. I asked how she did that. She said I must do it properly. I asked if she would teach me. She said "Yuhhh." (Yes.)

I learned an amazing amount of information. **(3750)**

I asked her if I could talk to the Silent King. She asked why. I told her we wanted to leave. She said no, dashing what hope we had built up. I went on to ask her about Hargrimm. She said he was their leader and worried. I asked why. She said because of Soego and Acaste.

I asked why he was worried about Soego and she said because he preaches death. When I pressed further she said he wants them to die. I asked why this was and she said because he is a Dustman.

We then spoke of Acaste. Anger, she said. "Anger?" Acaste want kill everyone, she answered. Why? Hungry, Angry.

Leaving Mary, in the twisting hallway we met the Doubtful Skeleton. This fellow was considering whether to meet the True Death. I said that there was no reason he should give up his life.

I thought it time to return to Soego's chambers. An idea had blossomed...

Soego Part 2

I told him of the Doubtful Skeleton and he left, leaving us free to inspect his lodgings.

After prying apart his bed we found a journal. **(2000)** It detailed how Soego was bitten by a Wererat and become a minion of something called the Many-as-One. I suppose the Cranium King. He was sent here to spy on the undead.

Hargrimm

We quickly returned to Hargrimm. When I accused Soego of being a spy Hargrimm asked for proof. I told him of the journal. He immediately took us to Soego and he received his "reward."

Yes, I ratted on him. Sorry, couldn't help it.

After some heated words Soego changed to his true self, giving up protection as a Dustman. Hargrimm cast a most potent spell, calling down arcane magics that smote Soego, killing him instantly.

Returning to his rooms afterwards all we found was his head and a rusty dagger.

Nameless Zombie

Feeling somehow calmer we went looking for Hargrimm, who had gone back to his duties. Near where we first met the merchant we saw a female zombie who entreated us as we passed. I asked why she was so distressed.

She said she had forgotten her name. I asked if I could help. She said it was carved on her tomb in the Watery Catacombs. I said how will I know and she replied that there was a chest bolted down near her grave.

I asked why it was so important. She showed me that she was rotting for lack of knowing. I told her I would look for it.

Hargrimm

Talking to Hargrimm again he was adamant about not letting us go, though he did give us a loophole. If we can perform enough good works he might change his mind. He told us how much rats bother them, that if I wanted to help I could kill all I found. I said that I would and left.

We found a small pack in the hallway where the rock-fall took place. I don't know how we missed them the first time, but our minds were not focused.

We went back to Hargrimm to report our success. **(3750)** Hargrimm was pleased. I asked if he would take our request to the Silent King and he assented. When he came back he said we were free to go. Wonderful news. We felt a great deal wiser than when we entered. **(7500)**

[For those whose lust to kill runs high there is a nearly 5000 experience point difference in favor of this peaceful run through.]

Weeping Catacombs

[You don't need to wag around all these skulls you keep finding. You only need one, important skull some time later. You can use any named skull you find. I didn't know that at the time, which is why I was wagging around so many of the bleeding things.]

We went back to the Weeping Catacombs. I thought I remembered where Nameless' grave might be. I thought it was also time to show Emeric and Sharegrave what we'd learned.

Chad

When we emerged into the Catacombs I looked at the first corpse I saw. It started talking to me. He said his name was Chad and he needed our help.

I asked what was wrong. Chad said that in order to set things right I would need to kill all the Vargouilles in the Catacombs. He offered to tell me where a powerful Item was. I said I would help.

As we moved through the passages we always took the left turning. I carefully examined each corpse as we passed to see if it would speak to me.

Burt

Near the exit back to the Village there was a corpse dressed in dark blue or purple. He said his name was Burt and that he and his pal Lowden had fled when Gris was caught by something. Lowden had all the swag from their work and ran off into a "bad" crypt. A trapped crypt. I asked about the traps. He said it had all manner of injurious devices. I thought I knew the crypt he meant.

Gris

We entered the splendid crypt again where Gris was slain. He spoke to us. He asked if he was dead and I told him he was. Then he asked if he was still in the catacombs and I told him yes. He asked what happened to his bloods, Burt and Lowden. I told them they were dead also. That seemed to make him feel better.

Asking about the catacombs he told me there is a secret chamber somewhere in the Drowned Nations, but he didn't recall where.

I asked him to tell me about himself. His full name was Gris the Vulture. I told him Quint was looking for him, that Gris had something of his. He told me Quint's charm was back in the village! I asked where and he told me where it was.

[Buried in a refuse pile right next to Marta's.]

South of the entrance to the Warren of Thought we came to a hallway we had not explored. In a tomb in the center were a few coppers, a bandage and another skull. In a low shelf against the north wall were some embalming fluid and more bandages.

Chad

We returned to Chad having killed the last 3 Vargouilles. **(3750)** He told us of a magic bottle that never stops its flow. Could this be the bottle the face wanted? He said you have to go past either the dead or the rats into the Drowned Nations. Once there you head down the main passage past 3 doors on the left. Under an arch, then the first door on the left. The arch closest to the back wall. He said he didn't know the command word, but it would still trickle some drops.

We decided to push a little father with this latest news and went to the Dead Nations.

Dead Nations

We turned left on entering and were able to unlock the gate. In the next room were numerous barrels, holding a few bandages among the junk and rags.

We moved on and came to another door. We could dimly make out the legend Drowned Nations written in a shaky scrawl.

Drowned Nations

The door opened on a circular room containing several slabs and a table. There were wards to the north, some sort of instructions for the ghouls who were everywhere around us. On the table was a copper earring. Handing it to Dak'kon I moved on.

The true cost of trying to fight our way through the pack when we first entered the Dead Nation was now clear. We would have been continuously fighting for every step we took for long hours. I was glad that I had held my temper above. Not only for that reason, but also at the end I felt a fondness for Hargrimm. He was doing the best he could to keep his people together under trying circumstances. I believe it would have been evil to cut them down.

We had the choice of a door or three passages. We took the right-hand passage, which led southwest.

Along the left wall was an open tomb with more bandages, a gold ring and an enchanted sledgehammer. We put a good deal of our possessions there so that we'd have a lighter load.

Exploring that room we found it had no exits save the one we used, so we returned to the main chamber and took the next right, this time leading southeast.

We saw a bizarre and awesome beast. Easily as large as all three of us together. A Trocopotaca. It did not care for visitors...

But as we moved further into the room several ghouls joined us in attacking the beast. It ran down a hall to the southeast, reaching an intersection, where more ghouls joined us. We slew the beast, but were then set upon by numerous Lesser Vargouilles.

Together we killed the Vargouilles. Afterwards I went through the possessions of the few ghouls which were slain.

Moving to the last intersection we turned right. This area seemed a maze of crossing passages, but whenever we had a choice we took the right-hand path to keep our bearings.

We encountered another of the beasts and the ghouls assisted us (or we assisted them) once more.

The passage to the southwest ended and we went back up the passageway, again turning right at the first opportunity.

Ahead of us next to a broken pillar were many open crates standing on end. In one of them was a Blood Charm, which we were happy to see.

Two ghouls standing in a passage to our right suddenly fell dead. Near them was a strange looking chest with spikes all around it. It was locked. I opened it without difficulty and inside were almost 30 coppers, a golden bracelet and a pair of iron knuckles.

I should say that I had changed to using the punching daggers of Moorin since I expected most of our foes to be living and wanted the extra protection they afforded me.

The knuckles were enchanted, though not as good a weapon as my daggers.

Looking at my journal I realized that this must be the tomb the Nameless Zombie had told me of. I was saddened to see that her name was illegible except for her first initial, though I could make out the name of the child, Bah'jin, who buried her. Now all I could give her would be an initial.

We left the room and went northeast taking the next hall right to the southeast.

Standing still at the entrance to a large room we watched as 8 or so Vargouilles fed on a Trocopotaca.

Dak'kon collected himself and threw his anger at them. They left their meal and charged us and we swung until all were dead.

In one of three chests just inside the room we found a good selection of loot: a Bone Charm, 2 dozen coppers, a silver earring, 3 Charms of Infinite Recall and a set of enchanted punch daggers. Another locked chest was empty.

We passed through the room and left to the east coming upon several biers, finding another Trocopotaca. This time we would have its full attention, as there wasn't a ghoul in sight.

I had Morte use his most dangerous weapon, his mouth, letting loose a stream of insults. (Hey, watch it, Chief.) I took out my club and between the insults and confusion from the club the poor beast had no chance.

We then searched the room. When I disturbed a bier in the center several Vargouilles appeared and attacked. For some reason they all attacked me. I felt like something Marta had been working on, but eventually the Vargouilles were dead. Moving back to the bier I looked in to see what I had paid for with blood.

A few trinkets was all. A skull, a copper earring, a silver bracelet and needle and thread, which I immediately put to use.

Walking further into the large, irregularly shaped room we met another Trocopotaca. I let Morte loose and we quickly dispatched it. We found another of the creatures at the far eastern end of the room near a collector's body. Using the same procedure as before we butchered it.

Searching the body I found the Bronze Sphere, forty-some-odd coppers and a battleaxe.

We decided to leave for now and collect our many rewards. We were all tired and had not rested for some time. All of us were wounded.

On the way back I talked to Dak'kon about the Art to pass time. I thought it best to return to wizardry as my studies there were lacking still.

[Something I noticed after a while is that you can tell what's in loot left by your enemies by the icon used. They very neatly combine them so that you will only see coins where there are coins, for example.]

Dead Nations

Nameless Zombie

On the way back we saw the Nameless Zombie again and I told her the truth about what we found. She was overcome with anguish until I suggested that she pick a new name. Still taking it all in she seemed unsure and confused and asked if I would name her. I did. It is now our secret. I felt knowledge return to me. (5000)

Buried Village

Barr

We left the dead and returned to the living, if subterranean. I thought Barr was up to his old tricks once more and was about to make him regret his decision when he smiled nervously at us and opened the gate. I suppose even this dog knows his master.

Uhir

I saw Uhir and gave him his knife. I felt much better. (5000)

Quint

We checked in on Quint, but he was no help locating the pile of rubbish where his charm was stashed.

Pharod

Next we went to see Pharod and I gave him the sphere. (15000) He ignored me when I asked for answers at first; he was so wrapped up in his new plaything. I asked why I was to seek him out. He asked me to stay my weapons and listen. I told him to tell me as I was losing patience.

He said he had stretched the truth a bit about how much he knew about me. I told him this had better be worth hearing. He said that some time ago I came to him and asked for an audience. An audience, said I? Yes like he was royalty. Like I was royalty. I pointed out that he was--had been. Once, he said, angrily. He went on that I knew too much of his history. I asked what I had wanted from him.

He said I asked a boon. I said go on. He said I asked that if any of Pharod's agents should find my body to keep it safe. I see. Is that all he knew? I questioned. Then I felt that Pharod was hiding something involving me and that it scared him. So you granted my boon just like that? I asked. Pharod said that promises are easy enough to make to a dead man. I kept forcing his hand. I said he was a merchant. Aye, he said. After I'd strung up a score of his blood on the Hive walls to die--then I come to him and demand a boon. I said that I was sorry about his people, that I would make it up to him if I could. He said no matter.

I asked if that was the only reason he agreed to my request. He said that I knew things about him only he knew. That I would fetch the Sphere for him. I asked is that all he knew? No, he replied, but it is all he knew about me.

Then I pressed him about what he took from my corpse until he gave and returned what his daughter had given him, for it was she who found my body. Stunned that such as he could have a daughter I asked who. Annah. She found me dead in a place where most collectors wouldn't go. He said I'd have to ask her.

I said that my patience was at an end. If he didn't give back what she had given him in token I would tell the Dustmen. He fell silent. But I knew I had him.

Well? (1000) Where has the decency of man gone Pharod grumbled. He went off for a moment, and then returned.

I asked who was it that found me, again? He said Annah. I said all right, I'd ask her and where was she. Hiding in the shadows, listening he replied. She's here? At that moment she appeared.

I said that we had met before, in the Hive outside the Mortuary. She and her father then had a "heart to heart" talk, if such as Pharod ever had one. I said that she might have checked to see if I was alive before dumping me off. She said maybe I should have been more careful. I suggested that I show her what it's like to be lying near-dead in an alley.

She said she wasn't afraid of me. Then Pharod told her to show me where she'd found me. She agreed. And off we went.

SE Hive northeast of Smoldering Corpse

We were at the painted door again. I had passed by many times, even examined it and it was still what it appeared to be, but she insisted past that door was where we needed to go. She said the Starved Dogs had painted it so that it was a door only as long as no one looked at it, that the paints turned it into a painting if you saw it. I'm beginning to think that being dead has more advantages. Her explanation gave me a terrible headache.

She said this place was very dangerous, so I suggested we equip ourselves before venturing in. Truth to tell, I was eager to see those whose quests we had completed.

Fell

First we went to see Fell. I wanted him to look at the arm I'd found.

When we entered Fell's shop I stopped Annah and asked her why she gave me the wrong directions to Pharod when we first met. She said I'd a done the same.

Then I asked what she was doing there. She said looking for deaders.

I asked if she found anything on my body before brining it to the Mortuary. She looked at me warily and said mayhap, but if she had, it was hers. I said I didn't have time for games, what did she find. She said I had some fist irons and a bit o' jink which she left for the Dusties so they'd think she was a bit honest. I also had an ugly ring that she kept which she showed me. I said that I wanted it back. She tossed it at me.

I asked what she meant when she said that some stuff from my body had gone into Pharod's keeping. She said he takes a bit off of each corpse. Off every corpse, I asked. That's a lot of corpses. Aye, she said that hear tell Pharod had a stash pit somewhere close to him. I said and that's where he puts the tribute? Aye. Now what was I on about, she asked. Did I want to bob him?

I said I had no reason to. She warned me against such a thing, that Pharod could be as mean as spit. Then we talked about where he would keep the tribute. I said he wouldn't want to walk far on his lame leg. She said that that was a show. I suggested that the crutch could be a portal key. She wondered aloud how it would be used.

I asked her about the area where she found me. She said it was strange. I asked strange how. She said some berks said it was haunted. Shadows? I

thought to myself. Is that what the blasted note Pharod gave me was talking about?

Then I asked her to train me as a thief. She spent some time with me and seemed pleased at the end of it.

Then I asked her a bit more about Pharod.

I asked if she could tell me anything else about him. She said he'd been at the village for a stone's age; maybe even found the place. I asked if he was searching for the sphere all that time. She said she supposed, though she didn't get it. I said that I thought he was searching for it because he thought it would save his life. (2500) She asked what I meant. I said that I'd heard he hadn't led a good life, that he was destined to go to the hells when he died. Really? She went silent then shook her head. No accounting for his foolishness, there isn't.

She said he wasn't her real Da. I opined that I didn't think they looked much alike. That set her off, tail twitching. She asked what I meant by that and I said I that I didn't think they looked like each other. That did nothing to help things. She went on about what could it have been, her hair, her skin, then said sarcastically that maybe it was the tail.

I asked what in the hells was her problem. She said a dagger was a dagger. I replied that all I was saying was that she and Pharod didn't have much in common. She flushed red and said is that so.

I asked if she'd ever looked at herself. That she was confident, sensible and graceful. She just stared at me. I said that that was all I meant. She was still staring so I asked if she was listening. Suddenly she leaned in and bit me on the neck and asked if I fancied my chances.

I bit her back. She hissed and clawed at me, tearing away from me. Said she was only teasing. I said if she didn't like it then don't do it. She said she'd do as she pleases, but she was still red.

Annah had seemed on edge ever since we entered Fell's shop. When I started to talk to him she stiffened. I asked her what was wrong. She asked if I was daft. I asked what the problem was. She said it's Fell; let's be away. Again I asked what the problem was. She said he was a dabus who wasn't a dabus.

I promised that no harm would come to her while I was here. She said Fell was a dabus that had angered *Her. * I asked if she meant the Lady of Pain. She said aye and I should heed my tongue; that we should go. I said I wanted to speak to Fell first. She begged me, said that no good'll come of it; that she didn't want to die. Again I promised that no harm would come to her while I was there. Finally, she calmed herself, but I could tell she was still afraid.

At last I turned to Fell and asked him about the arm I'd found. As I suspected, he said it was mine, but the tattoos were his. He also said that one tattoo spoke of a time when my path was shared by four others.

I asked what four others. Four strings of symbols swirled from his head, matching the pattern upon the arm. He asked if he should tell me their hearts. I said yes.

One unloved who loves one who does not love.

One who does not see what others see and sees what others do not.

One who is familiar and bound with duty.

One who is a slave and his chains are words.

The symbols blended together into a chain; the chain bent until it was a symbol I recognized. I asked what it was. He said it was torment, that which draws all

tormented souls to me. He said the flesh knows it suffers even when the mind has forgotten; that I wear the rune always.

I asked about the other tattoos on my arm. He said they were ones forgotten, now remembered, that I could wear them if I wished. I asked to see and he showed me his wares, but now there were new tattoos available, some much more powerful than those I'd seen before. After inspecting all of them, I bought the Tattoo of the Last Incarnation.

I asked if he knew how I died. Shadows, he said. Shadows? Many shadows, they streamed from the darkness then left me to die. Why, I asked. He said he did not know.

Then I asked about the frames in the back room. He said it was his "gallery," that the discarded skins were his canvas. He said he was saddened for me. I asked why. He said that tragedies have built themselves upon the foundation of the mark of torment I bear. I have endured great pain.

I asked what he meant. He said that he admired me because I have never surrendered to the weight of these losses. Go on, I responded. These losses blanket this life and all of my past ones. That I was exploring the infinite paths of life. I asked him to tell me more. He warned me that each of my lives cast a shadow on existence, that I must travel to a place where these shadows have gone mad and regrets have scarred the earth.

I asked if there was anything else he could tell me and he said do not sign anything. Very well, I responded. He asked if I felt complete. I said I did not. He said to keep faith and I would become whole again.

I took my leave. As we left the shop I invoked my new tattoo. Memories came back to me (1800) and I felt more aware.

NE Hive

Emoric

We went to see Emonic and I told him I had found Soego and where I'd found him. He asked why was Soego there. I told him that he was infected with lycanthropy; that his mind was no longer his own. **(2500)**

He asked if I still wished to join the Dustmen. I said yes. He told me it would require a promise, that I must I have left life behind and that my goal is to reach the True Death. I said very well. Again, did I believe the tenets? I lied and said yes. He said he would be my witness and I made the vow to serve the Dustmen; that I only seek the True Death.

Then he said he had things to tell me, so I listened. He said that the dead dwell among the Dustmen, but sometimes they are enemies of the living. I said it had not escaped my notice. He told me of the Dead Truce. I said I see. **(2500)** Furthermore that there are magics that prolong life, but that they are anathema to our faction. Did I understand?

I asked if that included healing spells. He told me that curatives would work, but reincarnation and resurrection magics should not be used.

I asked what if it is difficult for the person to die. He said the nature of my question was unclear. I started to speak of my belief that I was immortal and something stopped me. I went on to talk of other faction business.

[If you DO tell Emeric you're immortal you will be drummed out of the Dustmen, but moved strongly towards Lawful Good. You pay your money and take your choice.]

We talked more about the Dead Truce and he made it clear that if I attacked them I was breaking it and that they would never attack me first.

I asked as a Dustman what sort of assistance was available to me. He said I would have access to their storehouse of knowledge, magics and items and that I could also go to him if my body was in need of healing or rest. I asked what he had in his storehouse and he showed me.

There were many things in the storehouse that piqued my interest. Unfortunately, most of the more powerful items were only usable by Dustmen. I purchased two spells for embalming, which could be used to heal Morte or myself. (Hey, chief. Nice to know you care.)

On our way to see Sharegrave we met another Abishai and decided to challenge it. Morte and Annah were seriously injured, but we did kill it, learning much in the process. It will be some time before killing one of these fiends becomes routine.

We stopped in at Arlo's to rest and recuperate. I committed the minor embalming spell to memory.

I told Sharegrave where Pharod was getting the bodies. He asked how did he get beneath Sigil. I told him if he wanted to know that it would be extra. He offered half again what he was going to pay. I said double it and it was a deal. We shook hands and he turned over the coin.

I thought it was time we finished our dealings with the ruby and its box so we ventured into the Alley of Dangerous Angles.

I was immediately accosted by a scurvy Dark Alley Shiv who insisted on payment if I was going to see their leader. I decided to pay and see what happened. He let us proceed unmolested, aside from a few snide remarks.

Krystall

Moving west we eventually came to the area controlled by the Razor Angels. In the center of their camp we talked to their leader, Krystall. She told me who she was. When I asked about the Angels she said that they were only thugs, not murderous thugs like the Shivs. The Angels make their living by charging a toll.

She wanted me to kill Rotten William for her and offered us free passage for life in return. I asked her to tell me more about her gang while I considered. She said the Angels were good while the Shivs are evil and led by an evil man. I decided to take her up on the offer.

On the way back to see William, the Shivs hit us up for money again. I refused and we dispatched them easily.

Moving on we encountered the main group of Shivs and a larger battle ensued. They fell to our blades. Then Rotten William advanced on us. He went down quickly. He had over 300 common on him. Not bad for a little bit of work like this.

Near where William fell we entered another tent and met Gamlin.

Gamlin

Gamlin asked why we were in his tent. He had a very hostile manner and insisted we leave.

Rauk

In a burnt out building nearby we found Rauk and a number of mages-in-training. Rauk has an interesting speech pattern. If I understood him correctly he wanted us to get some rings that he forgot and left in a tent. I said we would.

There were a number of containers in the building that had little of value. A copper was the most worthy item we found. For our troubles we were zapped with various magical cantrips.

North of the crate in William's former domain we entered another tent. A woman was rummaging through the tent as we entered then quickly left when we spoke to her after protesting her innocence. In a corner, by the stove under a loose board we found a silver ring.

Having obtained the last ring from the tent we went back to Rauk. (500)

Apparently that was all the budding mages needed, as they soon completed their enchantment, summoning, of all things, a Lim-Lim. As odd as that was what happened next was stranger still. The Lim-Lim quickly attacked and killed all 5 mages. I don't know what to make of this. The Lim-Lim doesn't act like it minds us at all. He also likes Rauk well enough.

Searching the bodies and still not believing what we'd seen, we found a Clot Charm, a gold earring, a green steel dagger, a gaudy ring, a silver earring and three scrolls: Fist of Iron, Identify and Armor. Still scratching our heads we left the building to find Krystall and tell her we had dealt with Rotten Bill.

Krystall

Krystall was grateful for our deed and thanked us. (1500) Then she had another proposal. A man named Blackrose is preying on her gang. We then went looking for Blackrose.

Blackrose

To the far north-central part of the alley we met Blackrose. I decided to talk to him first to see what he had to say. It turns out that he wished William dead also and when I informed him of this he was glad. (1500) Then he insisted on our slaughtering Krystall also. I refused. We fought. He died. All he had on him was a Clot Charm.

He did pack a pretty good wallop. I was sorely injured, but we made our way back to Krystall in tact.

She was most pleased with our work and gave us a large purse with over a thousand coppers. (1500)

We returned to the turf Rotten had called his. I had remarked that a ruined building looked like it might have once been a temple of some sort. We searched the southern side and finally found an entrance just above a wall where some planks had been stood up against it providing a way in.

Aola

Inside was a man named Aola. He welcomed us to the cathedral of Aoskar and asked if we'd come to worship. As an incentive he offered me the position of second disciple. However, other matters were on my mind so I asked him about the box and its fiend. He insisted on taking the box. (1000)

I handed it to him, then watched, fascinated as he set it within a pyramid-shaped structure and said a prayer to Aoskar. A portal soon materialized and filled in all sides of the pyramid. Aola then casually reached in and opened Moridor's Box.

Not expecting this I attempted to stop him, but I was too late. Immediately the box disintegrated as a putrid smoke poured out of it, filling the pyramid. An intense feeling of dread filled the room. It took all that I had to remain where I stood. As my mind tried to leave I watched the tendrils of smoke disappear into the vortex formed by the portals. As the last wisp of smoke vanished so did the feeling of dread. Aola smiled and said witness the power of Aoskar, the Keeper of Gateways.

I pointed out that a fiend of such power would no doubt find its way back here and that it would be looking for him. He said that he had taken that into consideration. Each side of the pyramid was a portal to a different plane. In effect he had scattered the fiend's essence across the multiverse. Then he sifted through the remains of the box to retrieve the ruby.

He told me he would keep the ruby as payment for his services. I agreed and left the temple. Once outside the thought struck me that I needed that ruby to give to the mage in Ragpicker's Square so I went back inside and asked if I could purchase the gem. He wanted 300 coppers so I gave it to him.

SW Hive

On our way to Ragpicker's Square to turn over the ruby we stopped to do a bit of shopping in the SW quarter of the Hive. Now that the Abishai was dead we could browse among the wares at our leisure.

Ragpicker's Square

Jaryn

We saw Jaryn and were given 200 coppers for the ruby. (500) Personally I did not feel this was enough of a reward considering all that we'd been through about this flaming box. Actually, as Annah pointed out, we were out of pocket 100 coppers.

I asked Annah to rectify the situation, but in the small confines of the wizard's hut she was discovered. There was a brief fight and then he was dead. At least he was no longer so rude. We recovered the ruby, a nice gold ring and some items from a chest next to him that was magically trapped.

Mebbeth

While we were in the area we looked in on Mebbeth. She was doing well and had some spells that looked interesting, particularly Friends and Blind. I thought Friends would come in handy next time I sold items.

Buried Village

We then went to the Buried Village so that we could finally get Quint's necklace for him. It was just to the south of Marta's house on the roof of an abandoned shed in a box.

[The blasted thing is at x1047, y1673 area ar0109. The whereabouts of this one item has caused more consternation and frustration than any other in the game. Even when you know exactly where to look it is almost impossible to find, which

is why I've supplied the exact location. No need for you to tear your hair out and spend the hours I did trying to find it.]

Quint

Quint was overjoyed. **(7500)** He gave us nearly 500 commons. We then collected our stash and went.

We headed for the Dustie bar to do some shopping.

On the way I saw Prophiron again. He taught me more about how to handle clubs and blades.

Before shopping I took a moment and cast Friends. It had a pleasant effect on the prices when Emeric and I were discussing what spells I would buy.

[About Charisma. As soon as you can, buy the tattoos of Presence and Greater Presence. If you can afford it, buy 2 tattoos of Presence. You will lower the cost of buying things tremendously. Unfortunately, they don't affect the price you get for selling items back.

As an example, I badly wanted the Dustman club, which costs 6000 commons or so. With a good cast of friends and wearing all 4 tattoos I could buy the club for 4500. When I sell it back I'll still get 4000, same as without the tattoos, but considering the power of that weapon I'm glad to pay 500 to rent the thing.]

Since we had not finished exploring the Drowned Nations we returned there. While I wanted to find out what had happened to me I also felt a need to finish the quests I'd already been asked to perform.

Fell

I went to the tattoo shop to see if Fell had any new designs. On a hunch I asked Dak'kon to translate for me. I made the excuse that I didn't feel that I had gotten a clear understanding of Fell last time. Dak'kon assented.

Through Dak'kon I asked again about my arm. A number of symbols appeared over Fell's head, but Dak'kon remained silent. I asked Dak'kon what he said. Still Dak'kon was silent. I asked again what Fell said. Dak'kon finally responded that the arm was mine, but the tattoos were Fell's.

I asked if Fell said more than that. Dak'kon was silent, but I knew he was lying to me. He finally said that the rest of the symbols were not known to him.

I asked Dak'kon why he was lying to me. Dak'kon was silent and refused to look at me. I said to him since when has not knowing the truth of something ever helped anyone, Dak'kon? The counselor who councils ignorance betrays his station. **(750)**

He said there was truth in my words and that that truth should be known to him. Then he said that the symbols speak of four you have traveled with in the past.

I told him to go on and tell me what four they were. Fell spoke.

"One unloved who loves one who does not love.

One who does not see what others see and sees what others do not.

One who is familiar and bound with duty.

One who is a slave and his chains are words."

I asked Dak'kon for translation. He wasn't even looking at the symbols. He said the tattoo spoke of four minds. One was a woman, who loved a man who knew

her and knew not love. The other was a blind man who saw things no mortal eye could see. Another was a familiar, a mage's pet, bought and bound. The last was a slave.

After a moment I asked why he did not want to tell me this. Dak'kon said the four are bound with a symbol that is known to Fell. I asked Fell what symbol that was.

Fell said it was torment. I asked Dak'kon and he said the symbol was torment; that I've always worn it for the flesh knows what it suffers even then the mind does not. I asked if Dak'kon could tell me any more about the four on the tattoo. Dak'kon turned silent again. Then he said that he would not speak of it here, that I should ask when what we speak of will only be for the ears of those that walk with me.

After buying several tattoos to increase my presence we left and I talked to Dak'kon about what had just happened. I asked again about his travels, that Dak'kon said he knew the symbols.

Again he said they were of the four who have traveled with me in the past. I asked what four those were. Again he told me of the woman, the blind man, the familiar and the slave. I asked him to tell me what he knew of them.

He said the woman was young and that she worshipped time for in her blood she knew of things to come. The archer was a blind man who could see as others could not. He said that he knew little of the slave or familiar.

I asked if the woman was Deionarra. He said yes. I asked what he knew of the archer. Dak'kon said he knew little of him. He knew that he was a soldier and that alcohol had taken a portion of his life, but that in blindness he had come to

know a different sight and become strong. But that he did not know that strength.

I asked his name, but before Dak'kon responded I knew the answer. Again I felt the waters of memory rise to the surface of my mind. (3000) Dak'kon said that Xachariah was the name he carried.

I asked if he knew why I was traveling with them. He said no, that the tattoo said nothing of the path, that I may be the only one who knew it. I asked again of his travels. Who were these others I'd traveled with? Again he told me of their minds. This time I asked if he was the slave. (3000)

Dak'kon didn't speak for a moment and the surface of his blade roiled as if in confusion. Then he said that I should know that he owed me a service. In owing this to me it became as slavery.

I asked how this happened. He said it was a long tale between Dak'kon and the other that was once me. I asked to hear it.

He said that on the Plane of Limbo the People shape cities from their thoughts. That there is no place for one with a divided mind. He stared at his blade. As he did so it sharpened until it was almost as thin as paper.

Go on, I said. He said that a divided mind is an unfocused mind, that it fractures walls and weakens stone. As he spoke the edges of the blade corroded, the metal misting and melting along the edges. He said many divided minds may destroy a city.

I said that I understood. Dak'kon said that he had long known the words of Zerthimon. Dak'kon's voice many had come to know those words. The zerth protect the community from all threats, whether to the body or the mind. They

are the guiding stones in the chaos. So it was that he spoke the words of Zerthimon without knowing the words himself. Dak'kon no longer knew himself.

I asked if he doubted the words. No, he continued. His blade became keen once more. He knew the words, yet it came into his heart that perhaps others did not know the words as Zerthimon knew them. So division formed. As Dak'kon's mind became two, divided, those that looked to him became divided also. Many scores of githzerai, hundreds of scores doubted. Shra'kt'lor died in that day.

So those that followed him came to doubt as well and the city was weakened, I said. He said that the enemies of Zerthimon came. That their hatred of Zerthimon's words and the People lent their blades strength. They sensed the weakness of the city and they brought war with them. Many githzerai drowned in the chaos and died under the blades. Small beads of metal appeared on the surface of his blade as if it was blistering. He said that this happened long ago.

I asked what happened to him. He said that as he fell from the walls of Shra'kt'lor, that his self was broken. His blade was as mist, his mind in twain. He was adrift on Limbo's seas and he wished to drown. He died for days, his mind a sea of confusion when finally death came to him. It wore my skin and it had my voice.

Me? I asked. Dak'kon said that I asked that Dak'kon hear me. While he spoke my vision bled outwards and a crawling sensation began to travel through my skull. I was nauseous briefly, then my vision was suddenly chaotic, smeared, twisted and I was someplace else. Someplace in the past.

I surrendered to the memory ... Everything around me was in turmoil. My vision was hazy, swirling. Mist, pockets of fire, islands of mud, stone and ice-covered rocks swam through the Plane like fish; water arcing through the air lashed my

skin like teeth. I steadied myself; this was the Plane of Limbo and nothing is stable. I focused on the dying man that lay before me. It is why I came to this place.

I examined the zerth to see if he still lived. He was a githzerai. His body was embedded in an earthen pocket that swirled around him. Unconsciously he had formed a grave from the elements and though bits of fire and water kiss his face he moved not. His hands were ashen, his black eyes focusing on nothing. His emaciated frame told of starvation that was the least of his wounds. It was faith that had dealt him the mortal blow.

I looked for the blade he carried. In his limp left hand was a twisted mass of metal, melted around his hand like a gauntlet. As I watched it steamed and hissed, like a diseased snake. He did not seem aware of it, but the weapon had brought him here.

I said "Dak'kon, *zerth* of Shra'kt'lor-Drowning, last wielder of the *karach* blade, know that I have come to you with the words of Zerthimon, carved not in chaos, but in stone, carved by the will in an Unbroken Circle."

As I said the word Zerthimon Dak'kon's eyes rolled in their socket and attempted to focus on me. With some effort he opened his mouth to speak, but only a dry hiss came forth. I took the stone from my pack and held it before him so he could see.

I said, "Know that the words of Zerthimon inscribed upon this stone are true and know that your divided mind need be divided no longer. All you must do it take the stone and you shall *know* yourself again."

His eyes flickered over the Unbroken Circle and for a moment I thought he might be gone too far to recognize it. Then his right hand twitched and he pulled it

slowly from its earthen prison. His hand clutched the stone like a drowning man. His eyes flashed.

"Know that I have saved your life, Dak'kon, *zerth* of Shra'kt'lor." (6000)

Dak'kon's eyes shifted to me and he hissed again. He blinked, and then spoke, his voice barely louder than a whisper, but the words are what I wanted to hear. "My ... life is yours ... until yours is no more..."

Returning to the present I asked if this meant he got the circle from me. Yes, he said. In knowing its words he knew himself.

I asked him to tell me of the other incarnation he knew. The other me. He did not speak. I called his name and he said I should know that the other me was different. The differences were not on the skin, nor in the weapon, nor my attire. It was my thoughts and the way I acted upon those thoughts. My WILL became sustenance. I saw others yet did not see them. I knew only that they could serve me. My heart was treacherous and cold, but the cold never burned me.

I asked if I ever betrayed him. Dak'kon's blade changed to a dull, flat black and the edges, like teeth, began sprouting from the edge of the blade. His face clenched as he said it was not his will that I know of this.

Again I asked if my former self had betrayed him. He said that he had surrendered his WORD to me, his SELF. I asked what he meant.

He said that the People did not allow themselves to be enslaved to another in deed or chains. If they found themselves in such a cage they ACT to free themselves even if that means they must endure another cage for a time. I had performed a great service for him, but in so doing I had enslaved him. He acted to free himself by surrendering his word and his self to me until my death.

I pointed out that I could not die. He said he did not know that. He said that there is nothing left that he may surrender except his life. He only followed me now so that he might die.

I asked what the service was that chained him. He said that in saving his life his life became mine. I told him that it didn't have to be that way, that I released him. I no longer wished him to be a slave and to consider the debt paid.

He said no, that it was not my word that carried the weight and my word could not free him. The word that chained him was his own. The torment was his. That words would not free him. I asked if there was any way to free him. He said only if I died a final death, but death was not my path. We were at an impasse.

I vowed that I would find one; that I would find one that set him free. He said I should know that I have added other words to his words, that I had now chained us both.

Marta

We rested at Marta's and bought supplies from her and the Skeleton Merchant and sold him the last of our loot. Then we picked up the skulls we'd left by him and moved on.

Drowned Nations

We returned to the chamber in the far lower right and I went through the door we had passed by before into a Sealed Passageway. My companions stayed behind.

In amongst the bones of a skeleton to the right of the door I found a few coppers and some bandages.

This was a large chamber with a peculiar symbol in the center of the floor; some sort of glyph or rune was inscribed inside a circle while rays from that circle led off in different directions. It was ornate with statues and urns. The walls were lined with pieces of a strange greenish stone. Much gold and copper gilt was laid about, but the copper was oddly untarnished, shining as if it had just been hammered into place yesterday.

Going right I found another skeleton. As I went toward it a magical ball of lighting hit me. On the skeleton I found a score of coppers and an axe made out of an antler.

Seeing nothing else in the chamber I left through the central door, being struck by a tremendous bolt of lightning as I went through the arch. Taking a few steps into the next room I was suddenly caught up in a portal and found myself in another part of the maze.

There were yet more skeletons. On one of them I found a silver bracelet, a Charm of Infinite Recall and a set of punch daggers. Again I was struck by what I took to be a Magic Missile. On another skeleton on the other side of the chamber I found a silver earring and a pipe that appeared magical.

The strange rune was on the floor of this chamber also and a tomb was the focal point of the room. As I moved toward the tomb I was struck again by a lightning bolt that almost killed me. Inside the tomb was the Tomb Key. Looking at it a memory came back and I knew that if I could return to the entrance chamber of this crypt I could take a portal to somewhere else.

I left the chamber through the only exit from the room. As I did so I was transported again and found myself in the room I'd just vacated. After trying several times to with no success to change this pattern I stood in the center of the glyph and let the lightning take me...

I was once more at the entrance to this place. One the whole, this experience was not one I would care to remember in my next life. Again I walked toward the central tomb and was transported. I was now in a room to the east that appeared identical to the tomb area I had just left.

Other than the tomb itself I found nothing in the chamber. Inside the tomb I found another Tomb Key (2).

I left the tomb and went through a portal, again returning to the chamber I'd just left.

"This is going to hurt." I surrendered to the lightning again. I returned to life in the entrance. I was stiff all over and developing a tremendous headache. I walked toward the central tomb and once more was transported.

I was in the tomb to the south. In all respects it appeared identical to the other two I had visited. While searching the chamber I stumbled upon many more magical traps. I was coming to rue having decided to return to the ways of the warrior before entering.

The only item I found was another Tomb Key (3), which was in the grave. Expecting to be transported again I went through the archway towards the center chamber. I wasn't surprised, finding myself returned to the chamber again.

"Or die trying." I stepped into the lightning for what I hoped was the last time. Returning to life I walked with unsteady legs into the central chamber. This time

I was not removed from the chamber. This tomb was more ornate than the others and the walls were covered in runes.

I examined the runes. They said I have been divided. I am one of many men. I bear many names and each has left their scars. I continued to read...

It listed the many appellations that had been given me, Lost One, Immortal One, Man of a Thousand Deaths, Misery-Bringer and so on. The last was Yemeth which I took to be from another tongue. At least I knew why no one is glad to see me. I then examined the panel. It looked as if it would recess into the wall. I pushed and as it receded I heard a click comb from the sarcophagus in the center of the chamber.

I went to examine another wall's engravings ...

"I have lost lifetimes because of my killer. I cannot deceive him, so I must kill him. I tried to throw him off the scent. I left false bodies, tailored in such a way to placate him. I roamed the most outer planes, hoping to use distance as a shield. I built this tomb filled with traps to try and kill the killer. I hid."

I continued to read:

"All I bought was time. The attacks inevitably begin again, with more fury than before. Deceptions are useless. Somehow, the killer always knows that I live. And no matter where on the planes I hide, he finds me ... eventually."

This panel also looked as if it would recess, so I pushed it. Another click was heard from the sarcophagus.

I turned and examined another wall. It spoke of the need to record my journeys so that I might learn from them. It also cautioned that the sources of information

I used must be protected. I realized that this chamber was one of my journals, as I had been told. This panel recessed too.

The next panel was in the same tone as the tattoo on my back. Again it spoke of the journal and said that Pharod could fill in the gaps. I continued to refresh my memory. I told myself not to tell anyone who I was or what happens to me or they'd send me to the crematorium. READ the Journal, and then FIND Pharod.

Then there was one more line: "Don't trust the skull." I think I shall have a LOOONG talk with Morte when I get back. If I get back. He has a lot of explaining to do.

I pushed the panel in.

Yet another panel said, "Fear names. Names have power in identity. Others can use names as weapons. Names are a hook that can be used to track you across the planes. Remain nameless and you shall be safe."

Another panel: "I suspect that we will continue to die and be reborn until we finally get our life right. I do not know what we have to do to bring that about, though.

A different panel: "There is nothing that can be done. Memories are gone, perhaps never to return. With every death I lose a part of me."

"How can one be immortal and still die?"

The last panel: "What little life there is in the world is draining out this hole in my body. The world can burn, the planes can burn, just give me life!" I seemed to have been of mixed minds about my existence.

I went to the sarcophagus. The lid moved with ease. Only a key lay inside.

Walking south I was transported to a different room with a smaller sarcophagus in the center. There were no doors leading from the chamber, but when I walked directly south a portal appeared on the opposite side. In the sarcophagus were a Heart Charm, a Corpse Fly Charm, a Knot Charm, an enchanted battleaxe, a Bloody Teardrop, and a powerful spell: Ax of Torment. I went through the portal and rejoined my compatriots.

They asked me no questions about what had transpired and I told them nothing. Perhaps all my former selves were paranoid, but I decided that they made sense. Which may not say much for me. Having gotten used to Morte I kept him with me, but my eye was on him.

[All you need to do to get them to rejoin is talk to them. Morte is not the skull you should mistrust and is safe to have in your party so don't leave him here.]

We then moved back one intersection and turned right, then went straight through the next and went down a staircase. At the bottom of the stairs lay a body. There were several alcoves on either side of the room and unsettling noises came from them, as if something lurked just out of sight.

When we moved to the body a number of Vargouilles came out of the alcoves and attacked us. As a sign of our growing power we dispatched these beasts with barely a scratch.

Searching the body I found a skull, almost 3 dozen coppers, a warhammer and a Blood Charm.

We went back up the staircase and turned right, moving to the next intersection north and turning right again.

We encountered a battle between several Tropicata and a few Vargouille. Seeing our opportunity we attacked the Tropicata while they were distracted.

In a small box by one pillar we found most of 400 coppers. On our way out Annah happened to spy an object in the last alcove on the northern wall. It turned out to be the Decanter of Endless Water. We went back and walked north again and were back in the main chamber. As we turned right we found two ghouls arguing with each other about whether or if they would go attack the Tropicata.

As we approached they turned to us. I asked what the problem was. One of the ghouls said that the Tropicata was keeping them from expanding their domain. They said if we would kill the beast we could keep the loot. After making sure it was only a Tropicata we agreed. The beast soon fell to our blows.

Next to the beast was the body of a collector. On it we found a skull, a pipe and a Blood Charm. In the room also were two huge stone faces. Examining them we could discover nothing.

We returned to the Dead Nations to rest and identify the many new items we had.

The tear I had found in the Tomb was the Tear of Salieru-Dei. The two pipes both would cast Cloudkill some number of times.

Glyve

We returned to the Glyve, the face in the wall, who had sent us for the Decanter what seemed like an age ago.

He was eager to see it and asked that I pour some of its water across his lips. He promised again to tell me what I had asked. (5000)

As we watched the flow of water from the holes in his face turned clear and fresh water flowed into the Ditch. He asked if I wished my answer now. I said yes.

He told me to seek out the woman Nemelle. She resided in the Clerk's Ward in Upper Sigil. He did not know where exactly, but wished me the best of luck in my quest.

I thought it time to settle one issue. I asked Morte to read the tattoo on my back again. Morte did not want to and tried to distract me. I told him I wanted him to read ALL of it this time.

He got to the "end" as he had before and stopped. I told him to go on and tell me what it said after that. He asked what I was talking about, that there wasn't any more. (1000) I asked what about "Don't trust the skull?" Morte said he figured that it was wash so he didn't read the line out loud. I said what did he think it meant, then? He said he didn't think so, he meant, I could trust him. Right?

I asked if he was lying to me. He said no, that he hadn't steered me wrong yet. Yet, I said. I didn't like the fact that he didn't read me that line and I wanted to know what else he'd neglected to mention since we'd been traveling together.

He said nothing, that he'd told me everything. Well ... ALMOST everything, but nothing, you know, dangerous. I told him if there was anything else he should tell me ... NOW.

He said seriously, there was nothing else, he wouldn't hold out on me. I was finally satisfied with this and with Morte.

Drowned Nations

We moved down to the Drowned Nations and went through the last door out of the entrance room. It led to the Warrens of Thought. Unfortunately, that door was locked and Annah could not defeat it so we went to the Weeping Tomb to use that door.

Warrens of Thought

Entering the room we came upon some huge thing of rat kin calling itself Mantouk.

Mantouk

He asked what we were doing here. I told him we were exploring. He asked if we were scavengers. I said no, but then he wished to know why we were there. I asked who he was. He said that we were obviously in error and transported us to another location in the Warrens.

The room looked to be some sort of armory of the dead. In one of the racks I found a serviceable battleaxe. In another was a crescent hatchet. Another rack held a find: 2 Heart Charms, 3 Corpse Fly Charms and a mace. 2 maces were in the next rack.

We reached a door, which was locked. Fortunately one of the Wererat guards knew Annah from his former life. He attacked the other guard and then left, telling us to let the Village know that something awful was coming, though he didn't know what.

We went northeast, moving past several large siege engines and found more than a dozen Cranium Rats and several Wererats. They cast several spells on us, the most annoying of which was Swarm, which afflicted us throughout the whole battle. It was a difficult, nasty fight. Even though the Wererats struck with great ferocity we concentrated on their smaller brethren. They continued to cast spell after spell until we had slain at least 8 of the vermin.

[In case you missed it in the documentation, you can find out the exact location of a person or item by hitting L while holding down the left mouse button.]

There was a door on the northern wall, so we took it. We explored the eastern portion of the next room and went into the corridor going north that led from the middle of the room.

In the next room were a number of Wererats. Spread out as they were we were able to kill them one at a time without difficulty. Near the center of this large room was a tomb that had over 2 dozen coppers and bandages as well as a skull, a bone club and some junk.

In the far northwest corner of the room was a cask that held a green bottle holding a murky liquid.

We left the room by a door to the west. In this room was a lone Wererat who soon joined the rest of his pack, hopefully in some lower plane of hell. As we explored further we saw that this was really four rooms around a central pillar. To the northeast we found a barrel holding a score of coppers and a copper earring. We found several more Wererats scattered about the room as we searched it, but without their smaller cousins to cast spells they posed no great threat.

In one grave in the northwest corner we found over a score of coppers and a skull.

The "plans" of our verminous foe were revealed as a horde of Cranium Rats poured into the room. Again they cast spell upon spell, wounding Annah near to death and seriously injuring Dak'kon. Even when they tried to withdraw they continued to launch spells as we hunted down the final stragglers.

Down a hallway leading south from the room we met another Wererat, then went through a door into a large chamber. A Wererat acted as greeter and we showed it our steel.

Another horde of Cranium Rats surged towards us, casting spells. They came within a whisker of killing Annah again. I must try to convince her to stay back with the rest of the group. Being headstrong, she often runs into a room before the rest of us have gotten through the door.

This room was large and square and had a semicircle of tombs in its center. The grave facing the semicircle held two score of commons and another skull. We went through a door to the north and explored the other half of a long, rectangular room we'd been through earlier. This end of the room had many small boxes in disheveled stacks.

There were some boxes in the middle of the room that held some rags. Looking at our maps we found that we'd missed a room in the middle of the warren and retraced our steps through the large square room, into the hallway north then following the right wall until we came to a door.

Yet more Cranium Rats scurried out of the piles of boxes to greet us. I wished fervently we had spells able to affect large numbers of individuals, but we set to work killing them, each one of us taking a different rat until they were dead. I

don't know why, but these rats did not cast any spells at us, though there were certainly enough of them to do so judging by our previous encounters. In the boxes we found a few coppers, some rags and various healing supplies.

We went back to the room with the semicircle of graves and went through the southern door this time. We were in the other half of a long, rectangular room filled with graves we'd partially explored. In a grave along the center of the room we found a much-needed scroll of Ball Lightning as well as a skull, a leg bone club and some rags.

We went back to the room with the semicircle of graves for the third time and opened the door to the southwest. This room looked as if it was where the records of the graves were kept as there were several tables and chairs scattered about.

We could not open the door to the south, but when we opened the northern door we were immediately met by a Wererat. We backed into the room from which we had come and let him advance on us rather than face the unknown horrors in the next room all at once.

After slaying the creature we went into the next room and dealt with two more of the beasts. This room too must have been used to keep records. There were many more tables and chairs scattered around. In neither room could we find anything worth the search.

We then went back to the door to the Cranium Rat Collective.

Many-As-One

Many-As-One greeted us. He (it, they) was not happy. They were quite angry with us for killing so many of their number. They said that they did not wish

more battle with us. If we were willing to do a favor for them they could perform a service for us and we could part peacefully.

I asked who they were. They said we had already met as we killed them. If we had come to kill them all we could not succeed. They had no wish to fight, but if we insisted they would.

Annah was in favor of accepting their offer, while Morte warned that I should watch my thoughts. He said I should tread carefully.

Many asked that my companions stay silent. They also demanded amends be made.

I asked what they wanted from me. They asked that I strike down the Silent King and when I had to return. I asked why they didn't do it themselves. Many said that the dead are entrenched and difficult to harm. They don't know anything about the Silent King save that he exists. They do not like such mysteries. They only strike when they know they can succeed. The Silent King makes them doubt.

I refused. A tremendous battle ensued and yet, it was trivial. We slew countless rats. They cast spells without end. We could see hundreds of pairs of eyes looking at us from the shadows and I expected to die again, but eventually they had had enough and surrendered. I felt no real satisfaction. For all of their spell casting, we were not on equal footing and they were only fighting to live.

[If you have high enough charisma, at least 16, you can talk Stale Mary into opening a portal to see the Silent King and then substitute a regular skull for his. You have to do this before you deal with Soego as I did here or else the conversational tree will no longer exist. If you do this then you can accept the rat's quest. Or you can accept the rat's quest and pickpocket the key from

Hargrimm, but even sneaking Annah in as soon as she opens the door to the throne room the skeletons will attack you. You get 7500 experience if you do this and go see the rats again. They'll try to kill you in thanks. If you do this before killing lots of them you'll recover some memories and get an additional 3000 experience.]

Buried Village

Back at the Burning Village we rested at Marta's.

I went to see Pharod to see what had happened to him. Sharegrave's thugs must have caught up with him. He was dead. Searching his body I found the Sphere as well as his crutch, which seemed quite sturdy.

On a hunch I walked over to the archway north of the hand to inspect that area again. Touching the archway with the crutch opened a portal. Stepping through we found ourselves in Pharod's Vault.

Pharod's Vault

We walked down the stairs and continued clockwise until we reached a set of bookshelves. The shelves furthest to the left held a spell of Chromatic Orb and one of Magic Missile. The next shelves to the right held a Blood Fly Charm and a Blood Charm. The shelves furthest to the right held a piece of Cheese.

Walking down the ramp to the area below we found two score coppers on the shelves to the right and far up on the shelves a scroll of Swarm Curse. The first shelf to the left of the ramp down held nothing that we could find, though we went over every inch of it. Walking northeast along a walkway we searched a bench and found some embalming fluid, needles and bandages.

Finding nothing in the two sets of smaller shelves we went down the ramp and turned left. The first bookshelves yielded nothing, but the second set moving north held the Stinger Earring.

Searching the rest of the vault and finding nothing else we were concerned until I stumbled upon a section of the supports under the middle bookshelf that seemed different. I touched it with the crutch and a portal appeared.

Booty in our packs, we left. It was time to look up Mar who gave us the fiend box.

[To unlock all the circles of Zerthimon requires a very high intelligence. I got as far as I did with an intelligence of 16 (15 +1 from a tattoo) and will try to learn more after I have raised my intelligence further.]

On the way I asked to see the Circle of Zerthimon again and used it. It talked of the Githzerai, the First People and their fall into slavery by the illithids. They knew not themselves and had learned how to make other races forget themselves.

They had tentacles and lived within flesh. They saw flesh as tools for their will. They shaped minds with their thoughts. When the illithids found the People, the People were no more. They became slaves.

The illithids took the People from the First World and brought them to the False Worlds. As the People labored on the False Worlds the illithids taught them the Way of the Flesh. Through them the People came to know loss, suffering and death. They knew what it was to be the herd of another and have their flesh consumed. They knew the horror of being made to feel joy in such things.

The Unbroken Circle is the knowing of how the People lost themselves and how they came to know themselves again.

After I finished reading the First Circle I talked to Dak'kon about taking up the Art. Then I spoke to him of what I'd come to know from having read the First Circle. Speaking to him I told him I had learned that strength comes from knowing oneself. Once someone does not know their self they are lost. They become tools for others. **(300)**

I borrowed the Circle again from Dak'kon and studied it. I chose to unlock the Second Circle. It said that one should know that steel can mark flesh, but flesh cannot mark steel. One of the places where flesh served the will of the illithids was the Fields of Husks on one of the False Worlds.

The Fields were where the bodies of the People were cast after the illithids had consumed their brains. They used the bodies as fertilizer to grow the poison-stemmed grasses of the illithids. Zerthimon worked the Fields with no knowing of himself or what he had become. He was a tool of flesh and the tool was content.

On these Fields Zerthimon came to know the scripture of steel. He came upon a husk whose brain remained within. It had not been used as food, yet it was dead. The thought that a husk could die without serving as food was a thought he had difficulty understanding. From that thought came a desire to know what had happened to the husk.

Embedded in the skull of the husk was a steel blade. It had pierced the bone. Zerthimon realized that was what had killed the husk. The steel had marked the flesh, but the flesh had not marked the steel.

He took the blade and studied its surface. He saw his reflection. In the reflection of steel he first knew himself. It was sharp, but its will was the wielder's. It would be the blade raised against Gith when Zerthimon made the Pronouncement of Two Skies.

He kept the blade for many turnings, using it in the fields and thought much about it. He thought about how it was not being used.

The illithids were powerful. Zerthimon had believed that there was nothing that they did not know. Yet the illithids never carried tools of steel. The only used tools of flesh. When the blade had killed the husk, it was the flesh that had been weaker than the steel.

Then he knew that flesh yields to steel. Knowing this he also knew that steel was stronger than the illithids. Steel became the scripture of the People. Steel was the scripture by which the People came to know freedom.

Returning the Circle to him I spoke to Dak'kon of what I had learned. I learned that not knowing something can be a tool, just as flesh and steel, if upon encountering it you attempt to know its nature and how it came to be. (600)

Dak'kon gave to me the Scripture of Steel, which I copied into my spell book.

Once more I took the Circle from Dak'kon and used it to unlock the Third Circle of Zerthimon.

Zerthimon labored many turnings for the illithid Arlathii Twice-Deceased and his partnership in the cavernous heavens of the False Worlds. His labors were terrible and exhausting.

Arlathii ordered Zerthimon before him. He claimed that Zerthimon had committed slights against his partnership. Arlathii spoke falsely and only wished to know if flames lay within Zerthimon's heart. Arlathii would know if Zerthimon's heart was that of a slave or a rebel.

Zerthimon surrendered to the punishment and kept his strength hidden. He was placed within the Pillars of Silence to suffer for a turning.

Zerthimon moved his mind to a place where pain could not follow and left his body. He lasted a turning and when he was taken before Arlathii he gave thanks for his punishment to the illithid, as was the custom, thus proving himself a slave to the illithid even though his heart was still free.

By enduring and quenching the fires in his heart he allowed Arlathii to think him weak. When the time of the Rising came Arlathii was the first of the illithid to know death by Zerthimon's hand and die a third time.

I spoke to Dak'kon and told him I had learned what it was to endure. In enduring, grow strong. (900)

Dak'kon looked at me strangely when I said this. He again gave me a configuration of the Circle in a new form. As he did this I saw that Dak'kon was not looking at me. He was looking at the Circle. His blade took on the same texture as the Circle and Dak'kon suddenly appeared older.

I spoke his name aloud. His eyes rose from the Circle to gaze at me. He said I should know that he did not believe I would come to know the teachings of the Circle. It is a difficult path I will walk in learning the Way. He asked if my mind was focused.

I said it was, that I wished to learn more. I scribed Submerge the Will into my spell book.

I studied the Circle to know the Fourth Circle of Zerthimon.

The Rising of the People was built upon many ten-turnings of labor. Many of the People were gathered and taught in secret the ways of defeating their masters. They were taught to shield their minds and to use them as weapons. They were taught steel and freedom.

Some knew the nature of freedom and took it into their hearts and thus gained strength. Others feared freedom and kept silent. But there were those that knew freedom and slavery and it was their choice that the People wear their chains. One such was Vilquar.

He saw no freedom in the Rising, but opportunity. He saw that the illithid had covered with their numbers many of the False Worlds. Their Worlds were so many that their vision turned only to what they did not possess. He saw that there was much they did not see. To the Rising, the illithid were blind.

Vilquar went before his master Zhijitaris with the knowledge of the Rising. Vilquar added to his chains and offered to be their eyes against the Rising. In return he asked that he be rewarded for his service. The illithid agreed to this contract.

At the bonding of the contract a dark time occurred. Vilquar committed many betrayals and the illithids fed on many of the People to stem the Rising. It seemed the Rising would die before it could occur and the illithid were pleased with Vilquar's eye.

Near the end of this time Zerthimon came to know Vilquar's treacheries. In knowing Zerthimon forced the Rising to silence itself so that Vilquar might think that at last his treacheries had succeeded and the Rising had fallen. He knew that Vilquar's eye was filled only with the reward he had been promised. He would see what he wished to see.

With greed beating in his heart Vilquar came to Zhijitaris and told his master of his success. He said that the Rising had fallen and the illithids were safe to turn their eyes outwards once more. He praised their wisdom in using his eye and asked them for his reward.

In his greed-blindness Vilquar had forgotten why the People had sought freedom. He had lost the knowing of slavery. He had forgotten how his masters saw him. Thus Vilquar's betrayal was ended with another. Vilquar came to know that when his eye had nothing left to see his eye was useless.

The illithid gave Vilquar his reward, opening his skull and devouring his brain. His corpse was cast upon the Fields of Husks so that its blood might water the grasses.

Returning the Circle, I spoke to Dak'kon about the Way. He asked what I had come to know. I said that when one chooses to see only what is before them they see only a part of the whole. They are blind. (1500)

Dak'kon said to know that I spoke truly. Vilquar's eye blinded both he and the illithids. When the Rising occurred the ground drank deep of illithid blood. So victory was born from treachery.

I asked why this lesson became part of the teachings.

His blade shifted into a dead, night-black and his voice deepened. For a moment I thought him angry, but I was not sure. He said there is much about the Way and his path that is difficult to know.

I asked if he knew why that tale is part of the Way. Dak'kon said it is part of the telling of how our People came to know freedom. It tells us that there are those even among the People who are not of the People.

Once more he gave to me a configuration of the Circle to put in my spell book. Thus I obtained Vilquar's Eye, though I knew not enough to scribe it into my spell book yet. I would have to grow in knowledge.

I moved the plates into the arrangement Dak'kon had shown me to unlock the Fifth Circle.

Zerthimon was the first to know the way of freedom. Yet it was not he that first knew the way of rebellion. The knowing of rebellion came to the warrior-queen Gith, one of the People. She had served the illithids on many False Worlds as a soldier and she had come to know war and carried it in her heart. She knew how others might be organized to subjugate. She knew the paths of power and the art of taking from the conquerors the weapons by which they could be defeated. Her will and blade were as one.

The turning in which he came to know Gith Zerthimon ceased to know himself. Her words were as fires lit in the hearts of all who heard her. In hearing her he wished to know war. He knew not what afflicted him, but he knew he wished to join his blade to Gith. He wished to express his hate and share his pain with the illithid.

Gith was of the People, but her knowing of herself was greater than any Zerthimon had ever encountered. She knew flesh, she knew the illithids and in

knowing herself she was to know how to defeat them in battle. Her strength was so great that all that walked her path came to know themselves.

Gith was but one. Her strength was such that it caused others to know their strength. Zerthimon laid his steel at her feet.

I spoke to Dak'kon of this. I said that there is strength in numbers, but there is great power in one for the strength of the will of one may gather numbers to it. (3000) Dak'kon opened the Sixth Circle for me.

Thus I received knowledge of the Power of One.

I began the study of the Sixth Circle.

On the Blasted Plains Zerthimon told Gith that there cannot be two skies. In the wake of his words came war. On the Blasted Plains the People had achieved victory over their illithid masters.

Yet before the green fires had died from the battlefield Gith spoke of continuing the war. Many agreed with her. She spoke of not merely defeating the illithids, but destroying all illithids across the Planes. After the illithids had been exterminated they would bring war to all the other races they met.

In Gith's heart was fire. She lived in war and in war knew herself. All that her eyes saw she wanted to conquer.

Zerthimon said that the People already knew freedom. Now they should know themselves again and mend the damage that had been done. Behind his words were many of the People who were weary of the war.

Gith and Zerthimon were divided. She said that the war would continue. The illithid would be destroyed. Then the People would claim the False Worlds as their own. Gith told Zerthimon that they would be under the same sky in this.

Zerthimon spoke the Pronouncement of Two Skies. In the wake of his words came war.

I spoke to Dak'kon about what I had read. I said that Zerthimon's devotion to the People was such that he was willing to protect them from themselves. That there must be balance in all things or else the self will not hold. (5000)

Dak'kon twisted the plates of the Circle until there was a click. He stared at the two plates in his hand, but did not give them to me.

I asked if the second plate was for him. He did not speak. His blade shimmered.

I asked if he knew the Sixth Circle. He spoke, but did not meet my gaze. He said there is nothing more he could teach me. I know the way of the People as the People know it and it shall give me the direction by which I may know myself.

I said that was not what I had asked. He was silent. Then he spoke, his voice slow and careful. He said it had come to pass that he did not know the Sixth Circle. Once he did know it, but now he only saw the words. It was his path that he no longer knew the Way.

I said there was one other thing I would know. Why was Vilquar's Eye in the Circle? It tells of how the People benefited from a treachery from their own.

He said again that it was part of the telling of how the People came to know freedom. Did I not listen? It tells the People that even in the greatest treachery a greater knowing may be achieved.

I said that it didn't sound as if he believed that. I thought there was another reason. That is was there because of the Sixth Circle and the Pronouncement of Two Skies. It was there to justify Zerthimon's treachery to the People on the Blasted Plains.

Dak'kon was silent. His blade was as jet. Teeth rippled along the edge.

Continuing, I said that Zerthimon had divided the People on the Blasted Plains. He divided Dak'kon's race when they were on the path of victory. I would like to believe it was because he wished to save the people from themselves, but I didn't think Dak'kon believed that.

He spoke slowly and said that he did no know the Sixth Circle as it is known to others. He thought that the Third, Fourth and Sixth Circles were more closely linked than many knew. It was in that knowing he had lost himself.

I said that in the Third Circle Zerthimon submerged his will to deceive the illithids and in the Fourth it speaks of treachery. Then in the Sixth he divided his people before they exterminate the illithids. Might the words of Zerthimon not be his own?

Dak'kon said I should know the wound that is on his heart: he fears that when Zerthimon was upon the Pillars of Silence he did not submerge his will. That his will was taken from him by the illithids. And when he spoke on the Blasted Plains it was with their voice. What he did was not for the sake of the People, but for their former masters.

I said that it was possible...

He said I should know this and speak of it NO MORE in a voice as sharp as his blade. He said he shall never know the truth. There is NO resolution to this for he shall NEVER know Zerthimon's heart. And so he came to know not himself because of the Unbroken Circle.

So I came to possess knowledge of the Balance of All Things. And I knew that before my studies of the Circle could continue, if they could, I must grown in experience, abilities and knowledge.

NW Hive

Mar #2

I had noticed a number of dead Lim-Lim in this section from time to time and on this trip I noticed that the trail led to the open-air building with many columns in the northwest corner of this quarter. Following the trail I came upon Mar.

Mar was so glad to see us he practically screamed his delight. He expressed his pleasure at our arrival by asking what we were doing back, saying that we should not come back until we delivered the box.

I told him that we'd gotten rid of it. He said it did his heart good to hear us say that. He wanted us to let him live long enough to explain. I told him I was listening.

He said that the box had been around long as anyone can remember. Chant was that some folks were fighting and when they were done a huge demon was imprisoned inside the box. No one knows the truth about the box is, except the owner of the box will die if it is opened.

I asked why didn't the owner put the box where no one could find it. He said it should have been so simple, but who could live with such a death hanging over them?

I asked why me? He said first that I was new around there. He needed someone clueless to become the new owner and since the magics on the box were weakening he could tell he was running out of time. Besides, I looked like death warmed over, anyway.

I suggested that if he didn't want personal knowledge of the next realm he should keep talking.

Mar said that he also picked me because I looked like I might be able to handle it and he offered me a weapon and some junk as a reward for my trouble. These were what Ku'atraa used to get him to take it in the first place.

I told him to give me the reward and beat it. **(1250)**

Seeing an Abishai I struck up a conversation. It tried to bite Annah's head off, so I killed it for being so rude.

I went by the Gathering Dust to buy the Death of Desire, a club I'd had my eye on for some time.

SW Hive

Since we had over 70 rat-tails by now I thought it time we turned them in to Lort.

As soon as we talked in Lort screamed and asked us not to kill him. Funny, I seem to have that effect on everyone. Then he took a second look at us, never a good idea, and seemed relieved it was "only" us.

I asked if he was in trouble. He said the cranium rats were determined to be rid of him. I asked what he was talking about. He said that earlier today he found a large specimen of rat here at his office. He captured the creature and took it downstairs into the basement to deal with it. But then it grew into a man-sized creature and said it was sent to kill him for his crimes.

I asked what did he do then. He said he ran for his life and locked the door behind him. He said that if I slew the beast he would make it worth my while. I asked what he had to offer. He said he'd pay me 200 commons to be rid of the thing. I told him I'd do the job and he gave me the key to his basement.

We went downstairs and the beast attacked immediately. It was large, ugly, and after one blow of Death, very dead.

In a crate in the middle of the room I found a Recall Charm, some bandages and a needle and thread.

When I went upstairs Lort had to be reminded of the amount, but was happy with the result and paid in full. **(1000)**

I took this moment study again the Circle. As I did so I saw a strange link that mentioned the laboring of the Gith people to achieve the Rising. A new circle emerged from the link and I unlocked it, pulling the plate forth so that I could study it. **(3000)**

I read the symbols. It said know that the Rising of the People against the illithid was built upon many turnings. The Rising was shaped upon a slow foundation.

Steel was gathered. A means of knowing the movements of the illithids was established. When their movements were known the ways of their mind was known.

When the ways of the illithid were known many of the People were gathered and taught in secret the means to shield their minds and the way to harness their will as weapons.

These things were not learned quickly. The knowing of much of the ways was slow. From the knowing of one's reflection in a steel blade to the knowing of the submerging of the will to the knowing of seeing itself. All these things and more besides the People built upon.

After the knowing of this I spoke to Dak'kon. I told him that there was a Seventh Circle within the Stone of Zerthimon and that it spoke of the building of the rebellion.

He asked what the knowledge of the Seventh Circle was. I said it spoke of time as an ally, not an enemy. That time can sharpen even the smallest of efforts into a weapon that can strike the heart of an empire.

After a time of silence he asked if I would make this Circle known to him. I took the Circle and unlocked the Seventh Circle. (5000) As I did so two plates slid from the interior.

As there were two plates I suggested that we both study them. Again Dak'kon was silent. Then he said that there was much I had come to know about the Circle and my knowing carried a greater weight than his own.

This is how we both learned of the Missile of Patience.

Fell

We went to Fell's to look through his stock again and I bought the Tattoo of the Warrior. I gave Annah my Tattoo of Warding. She looked pleased until she caught herself.

SE Hive

Tenements

We went to the southeast quarter of the Hive to investigate where Annah found my body. (Can you say out-of-body experience?)

As we went in I had a brief vision. I saw Pharod being attacked or carried off by ghosts. I'd seen these same ghosts once before around me just before I'd awakened.

The building was filled with hideous sounds. It was as if souls were being wrenched out of their bodies somewhere off in the distance. For a moment I thought we might have stumbled through a portal into one of the hells.

We saw a Tiefling girl painting, but she paid us no heed. In one of the two barrels in the room we found a few coppers.

In the next room we found a barrel that had over 200 commons in it. We also found a thug who died without much of a struggle.

Moving on, we opened a door on our right to find a man and some sort of intelligent creature engaged in combat. Not wanting to be left out we joined in and killed both of them.

We then went back into the hall and opened the only other door. There was nothing in this room save a different door to leave by, so we took it.

There was a barrel in the next room with a few bandages. There was an opening on the opposite wall and we went through into a hall, and then took the first door on the left.

Tiresias

In this room were a large piece of machinery and an old man. As we drew near he turned and we could see that both of his eyes were missing. He spoke in jumbled sentences about 'friend words' he would speak of me and call chaos.

I asked if this form of speech was necessary. He seemed surprised that we were not part of one of the chaos gangs that ran through this area. We decided to leave him be, at least for now.

[This fellow will help you if you are of chaotic alignment. At this time I was Neutral Good.]

Sybil

Coming out of his room we went in the door opposite and met Sybil. As we entered the room a young woman stepped out of the shadows to greet us. She warned us that we should not go through the next door. I asked what was behind it. She said there was a gang of the barking wilders having some sort of gathering.

I asked her about them. She told me they were the Starved Dog Barking gang, a bunch of barmy Xaositect thugs that operate in this area. I asked how many there were. She said about a dozen, but she couldn't be sure.

I didn't think that would be problem for us, but asked if there was another way past. She said that she thought it might be possible to sneak from the other door to that room to the exit, but there was a problem with that. I asked what it was. She said the door was locked and that the key was with one of the thugs upstairs. I said that I would find it and bid her farewell.

Going southeast we entered a room with several large crates and a few barrels. Only one of the crates would open. In it was a silver bracelet. In one of the barrels was nearly 150 commons.

On the southeast wall of the room were two doors. Pausing a moment in thought we decided to open the one on the right, but it was locked so we tried the next one. It was not. In the next room was a stairway going up. In a cart by the stairs was a pry bar.

Going back to the locked room Annah was able to pick the lock. Several crates were stacked against one wall. It was locked so I set Annah to work. Not only was it locked, it was trapped, but she dealt with both problems and we had a look at the contents. After the build up it was a bit disappointing to find that all it contained was a little over 100 coppers.

Annah

From time to time to make the hours go faster Annah and I swapped techniques for lock picking, disarming traps and other thievish skills as we gained in knowledge. **(1000 per occurrence)**

As we reached the top of the stairs we found a hallway with a door directly in front of us, one behind us on the right, and one at the end of the hall. There was also an opening a bit further down the northwest wall.

We went through the opening into a large room with a low table and a barrel. In the barrel were 75 coppers and a bone dagger. As I moved away from the barrel I was struck by an arrow from some trap.

We then went through the door into the room across from us. In it were a number of barrels, crates and sacks, but none of them could be opened.

As we went through the final door Dak'kon was attacked by two Dogs who almost killed him before we could finish them off. While Annah stitched him up we examined the room. Other than a stairway leading up there was nothing of interest.

The top of this stairs led into a long hallway with a door in the middle. Examining the room and finding nothing but debris we opened the door. Three thugs greeted us with steel. As we fought I was suddenly struck by some potent magics.

Backing away from my attacker I saw a wizard at the other end of the room. Seeing that I could not close the distance before he let off another spell, I quickly sent him one of my own: Magic Missile. Since I had several of these memorized I thought that might buy enough time for my companions to finish the two thugs and close on him.

As my friend closed on the mage he got off one last enchantment before my final Magic Missile hit and killed him. On his body we found the Tenement Key and a few coppers. Dak'kon and I were still glowing greenly from whatever ill spell the mage had sent us, but after a few moments the effects wore off.

We stopped long enough to care for our wounds. We all had serious injuries, but eventually were well enough to continue.

We were in an L-shaped hallway with doors on either side of the leg we entered. Flipping a coin we took the door to the left. It was a storage room with a cart and some barrels. In the cart we found 4 Clot Charms and almost 100 coppers.

In the other room we found another thug, whom we swiftly dispatched. There was nothing in the room so we went back down the stairs.

After looking in vain for Sybil we went to the large storage room and prepared ourselves then went through the door to the back way through the Dog's meeting area.

It opened onto large room where 2 thugs waited on guard. Searching the room we found nothing.

We left the room by the door to the southwest, as that seemed the furthest area away from the thugs' meeting. This room likewise held nothing, but Annah spotted a secret door to the northwest. Before checking it out we went into the small room to the southeast and met another Dog. After putting him to sleep we let him lie while we searched what turned out to be a water closet. Looking in the pot I found a Blood Fly Charm.

As we went through the secret door we were met by a Dog who barked the alarm to the others and a large fight ensued with a dozen of the curs. I tried to cast a spell, but the fiends closed before I could get it off.

These Dogs were larger than those we'd met before and fought well. They gradually pushed us back against the wall. Even using up some of our store of

charms we had been holding out for difficult occasions such as this we were sorely pressed.

Finally it was done. All were slain. On one of the bodies we found a small red key and a key to the storeroom we'd gone through earlier. We found ourselves in a large, irregular room with many crates and sacks. In one barrel along the northwest wall we found a gold ring, silver ring, a few dozen coppers and a Knot Charm.

A door in the southwest wall of the room led to the Alley of Lingerin Sighs. Taking a deep breath, we went on.

Alley of Lingerin Sighs

This alley should have been named the alley of lingering trash heaps. It was a mess, with crates, barrels and various other piles of assorted refuse set about in no particular order.

Following the twists and turns of the alley we saw a hovel and entered it, finding a dabus dead on the floor inside.

As I bent over to examine the body a shock entered me and a wind blew through the room. There was a wrenching sensation in my skull as if a dabus was trying to reshape my skull. As I tried to focus my vision went black briefly, but the hammering faded until it sounded like it was outside my skull. Then my vision returned, but it was like looking through a haze and confused. I kept trying to focus and saw a spectral version of the dabus enter the building. As it did the windows and the doors became like water, sealing the building. The dabus turned and paused, then began a slow circuit of the room examining the wall and beating on each one once as if he were testing it.

The dabus completed its circuit of the room, then paused again by the door. It began hammering again. It chipped away the stone, but the wall repaired itself. Then the vision faded, but the hammering continued, first in a steady rhythm then slower and slower. I kept focusing ... (1000) My vision cleared again and the hammering ended. The body of the dabus looked as if it died in here, trapped.

I picked up the hammer the dabus had used and we left.

Walking further we came to a large gate to the east. Annah opened it and stepped through. We went down some steps and she showed us the place she found me. As she did so a section of the wall in front of us bulged out into a large face.

I asked Annah what that was, but she didn't know. She wanted to leave, but I said not just yet. Then a breeze picked up and the air was filled with the sound of creaking boards, rustling leaves and stone grinding on stone. From noise the clamor gradually blended into one voice, soft, but all around us at once.

"YOU? IT CANNOT BE YOU."

"Do you know me?"

"YOU ARE RESTORED AGAIN? I SAW YOU DESTROYED."

"Destroyed? Where?" At last, some answers.

"I SAW YOU DESTROYED HERE, IN FRONT OF ME. I SEE ALL WITHIN ME."

"Do you know what happened to me?"

"THINGS THAT CAST NO SHADOW ... WERE SHADOW. THEY ROSE AROUND YOU. TORE YOU DOWN. DO YOU NOT REMEMBER?" As I listened there was the stirring of memory. I closed my eyes to try to remember...

Shadows formed all around me, and then lashed out. I'm falling ... Then, from overhead I watch Annah kneel beside my ... body.

"YES ... YOU REMEMBER." The voice brought me back to the present. "DESTROYED. AS SOON I SHALL BE. I CANNOT DELAY DIVISION MUCH LONGER. PRESSURE BUILDS. SOON STONES WILL CRUMBLE AND THE FLOATING ONES WILL REPAIR ME TO DESTRUCTION."

"You're dying?"

"PRESSURE IS TOO MUCH. TOO MANY PLACES FOLDED INSIDE. NOT ENOUGH SPACE. MUST DIVIDE."

"Divide?"

Annah broke in, "It must be in the way."

"What are you talking about?"

Annah responded, "I think it's pregnant."

"Oh."

Morte stuck in his oar, "Freaky. So where are we technically standing right now?"

"I really don't want to know the answer to that, Morte."

"HELP ME DIVIDE. BRANCH OUT. EXPAND. NEW APERTURES WILL OPEN. YOU MAY USE THEM TO TRAVEL TO THE LOWER WARD."

"What do you need to divide?" I'm nothing, if not game.

"THE FLOATING ONE IS UPON ME. REPAIRING. IT PREVENTS ME FROM DIVIDING. I UNDO ITS REPAIRS. BUT IT RETURNS AGAIN AND AGAIN. REPAIRS ANEW. MUST REMOVE FLOATING ONE."

"You want me to kill the dabus in the Alley?" Hmmm ... I wonder if it's too late to go back and become a disciple of Aokosar?

"REMOVE IT. ONLY THEN CAN I DIVIDE."

"Very well, I'll remove the dabus for you." What they hey, you only live once. Twice?

We went back to where we had seen a dabus. I told it of the body in the Alley. It asked where, so I told it. The creature then went inside the building and the door locked behind it.

We went back to see the Wall. I told it about the dabus and what I had said to it.
(11500)

"YES. THE FLOATING ONE NO LONGER REPAIRS. IT IS NOW WITH THE OTHER. I HAVE CLOSED MYSELF AROUND IT. IT REMAINS INSIDE ME FOREVER.

Unfortunately that still left the "repairs" it had made. I agreed to undo them.

Finding the dilapidated hovel the dabus had been working on we pried loose the boards it had put in place.

We then went to the hovel on the other side of the building where the Dabus were now interred and used the hammer to put boards back in place.

We returned to the Wall once more and I told it I was done with the repairs.

"YES. ALL IS IN ORDER. I AM GRATEFUL." The wind picked up again, but more fiercely. "NOW YOU MUST GO. DIVISION BEGINS. THE WAY IS NOW OPEN TO YOU." (16250)

I bid the Wall farewell and it transformed back and the ground began to shake. The entire wall where the face had been seemed to melt in front of us.

As we hurried out of the alley the air and earth shimmered as buildings rose and fell. There was tremendous sound unlike anything I remembered hearing before.

Lower Ward

We entered the Lower Ward and were immediately accosted by merchants' tattles. Over their appeals for business I heard the sound of a scuffle. Turning, I noticed that Morte was no longer with us, but had wandered away. Following the increasingly louder streams of epithets I saw Morte being carried off by what looked like two Wererats. We started to give chase, but before we had gone a block they had vanished amidst the crowd. Someone will have a most unpleasant time when I catch up to them.

There was a pall in the air and many people were coughing. I stopped one townspeople to ask. He said that the ward is filled with the discharge of many factories, but there was nothing anyone could do about it.

I asked him about Morte, but he didn't have a clue.

Korur

At the entrance to the ward was Korur, a former warrior. I said that he looked knowledgeable and he allowed me to ask a few questions. I asked if he could teach me. He suggested I come back when I've aged a bit.

Talking about other matters I asked if he was all right. He said that the air should get better once the Great Foundry settles. I asked about the air and he said it was mostly because of the portals. I asked what he meant. He said that lots of doors to the Lower Planes let in fumes from who knows where.

I asked what he had said about winds. He said sometimes the wind blows in from Sigil's spire and drives the smog out for a while.

I asked what the Foundry was. He gave me directions and said that the Godsmen make things there out of iron. I asked who the Godsmen were. He said they were The Believers. They have their kip in the Great Foundry.

I asked if there was anything interesting to see. He suggested the tower. I asked him to tell me about it. He said it simply dumped itself in Sigil one day many, many years ago. It looked like it had seen a number of wars, from the losing side.

When I worked my way around asking about Morte he told me there were people that make a living by collecting the heads of the dead. They work for a basher named Lothar, the Master of the Bones.

I asked where to find him. He said to keep an eye out for a gutted building here in the Ward. But I didn't hear this from him.

Exploring the Ward we found a ramshackle building to the south that looked out of place with its surroundings. On entering the small hut we descended a staircase made of bones, the only exit from the room save the door we entered by.

We saw shelves filled with skulls. As soon as we entered Morte started flapping his chops, all glad to see us. I asked what he was doing here. He said those vermin nicked him and brought him here. He wanted to leave without delay.

I said he looked cozy up there with all those skulls. He told me to cut out the joking, that we had to leave before...

A flash of light and smoke made us close our eyes. When we opened them we saw an old man in flowing robes.

He asked who we were to enter without invitation. I asked his pardon and told him that he seemed to have something that belonged to me. He asked what that was and I said that my friend, Morte had wound up on his shelf.

He seemed amazed, asking if we seriously wanted the chattering skull with half the grace and manner of any ordinary creature. He knew Morte all right. (Hey, watch it, boss.) He said if we did we needed a greater skull in return.

I suggested that Morte was never his to begin with. He suggested that I was showing my ignorance and should fetch another skull if I wanted Morte back. Deciding to go with the flow I asked where to find a greater skull.

He told me that I should look in the tomb I believe I had built for myself. I told him that I had been there and that it was empty. **(30000)**

He was incredulous at this and insisted I go through the portal and provide an answer. I told him it was my own tomb. He then wanted another skull of quality, since I seemed attached to mine.

I left him, briefly, to talk with my companions. We agreed and I spoke to him again, offering the skull of Soego. **(15000)** He was content.

I took the opportunity to ask him some questions. I asked why I was immortal. He said that my soul was gone from me. It was taken by the night hag Ravel. He said that when I found my mortality I would have my answers.

I asked that he tell me of this Ravel. He said she was an enigma, even among her own kind, though she is evil through and through. He said the Lady had mazed her for her deeds.

I asked what she had done. Lothar told me that she was the maker of toys, puzzles, a solver of problems that didn't need solving. She came to think that Sigil was the largest puzzle box of all and set herself to undo it, ordering the army of fiends she commands to upset the balance of the city.

After he sent us away we went back and looked around his abode. Moving a couch we found a trap door leading down and took it. It opened up into a very large chamber with two exits. We took the door to the east. It led to what looked like a dump. Search as we might, we found nothing.

Leaving that area and going south we met Mantouk again. He would not let us past him.

Coming back up I spoke to the skulls lining the walls of Lothar's study. The first skull to talk to me was on the shelf furthest to the right.

Goatscomb

I asked who he was. He said his name was Goatscomb, a Wererat. I asked how many were-beasts there are. He said there are a great number. Almost all the animals have a lycanthropic counterpart.

I asked what Wererats were around here. He told me of Mantouk. Goatscomb "made" Mantouk, whatever that means. Mantouk was the ingrate who sold Goatscomb to Lothar. In retaliation Goat had told Lothar all Mantouk's secrets.

I asked like what? He said that Mantouk works for both Lothar and Many.

I asked how he got there. He said he was in rat-form looking for food at the Smoldering Corpse when a serving wench stabbed him with a silver fork. Mantouk found him and brought him here.

I asked what he could tell me of the other skulls. He said they were all judgmental. Just because they were human they thought they were better.

When I asked him about Lothar he told me to go away and fell silent.

Grimscalp

The next skull thought he'd seen me before. I asked where. He said Curst; gate town to Carceri. I asked what I was doing there. He said I was babbling something about some berk wanting to kill me and wandering in where I didn't belong. (Well, some things don't change.) He and some of his friends decided to roll me. After that he was betrayed, but not until after he hid some of my stuff. He was delighted to leave me in ignorance of where my possessions lay.

Again I asked about Lothar, but this skull wouldn't give, either. He also had no knowledge of the other skulls, thinking himself above them.

I asked who he was. He told me he was Grimscalp. Used to be an Anarchist. One of the Revolutionary League. They had secrets and cells and plans to topple the nature of the Planes so all could live in freedom. They were ready, but then another faction betrayed them.

I asked about the Anarchists. He said they are a secret society whose goal is to tear down the power structure, to free people from the lies and let everyone lead lives of their choosing.

Stern

The next skull was loquacious by comparison. I asked who he was. He said he was Stern, a practitioner of personal peace through redirection of hostilities. Grimscalp hissed that he was a wizard, assassin and a poisoner.

I asked how he came to be here. He said that he had a black book given to him in order that he might puzzle out its secrets. He unlocked its powers for a terrible price and sharpened his edge. He did not know the book would betray him to a mewling rat-thing that overwhelmed him in a wave of rodents. He said the book went through the hands of many disciples, betrayed them in turn and finally wound up with Mantouk.

I asked what he could tell me of Lothar. He said nothing. Whatever existence he now had was better than what Lothar promised should he speak.

After talking to them we used the stairs to the left and went up into some sort of study. Over on a table was some sort of wizard's container. It was locked, but Annah picked it cleanly. Inside was nothing at all. Sigh. After a careful search of the room we returned downstairs and left the building.

Pawn Shop

Moving west we entered a pawn shop. Annah picked the lock of one of the boxes in a stack in the middle of the room and found a Charm of Infinite Recall.

Miccah

Miccah and Brokah ran the shop. From the discussion between the two, business didn't seem to be going well for them. When I asked who Brokah was it became clear that these two had been married for perhaps too long as an argument broke out. Brokah was Miccah's husband of 21 years.

The argument continued and Morte picked up some new material. It became plain that we'd have to come back later to conduct business.

Giltspur

Standing outside the southern entrance to the Marketplace was a man shouting and carrying on. He had attracted an audience.

Morte said it was an auction and now was our opportunity to sell off Annah. Well, that set Annah off and they went at it for a bit until I told them both to shut up.

It turned out he had a store and could buy or sell to the man. When I asked about a job he told me he had an errand to run a handbill down to the print shop. He said he'd pay me 50 coppers for it. I took the job.

Giltspur had some information as well. I asked about the Master of the Bones, otherwise known as Lothar. He knew where Lothar was and also why he had the skulls. He suggested there was knowledge to be had if I talked to them; assuming they didn't drive me mad first.

He also told me bits about the Godsmen.

Marketplace

Drixel

At this entrance to the Marketplace was a guard in plate armor. When asked he said he was a Harmonium guard named Drixel. I asked him about the Harmonium and he told me of his beliefs and theirs. He said that they fight those who side with chaos including Anarchists, Xaositects, tanar'ri fiends and so on.

Aalek

At the first table we came to was an older man who bowed as we approached. He sold magical supplies. His collection of rings and bracelets was most interesting. Annah had such fun "shopping." She managed to pocket a Displacer Ring. She thought better of trying again, however, as this fellow

seemed most alert. I suggested we come back when we had honed our skills further and try again.

Moving on we found a large locked crate against the north wall. Annah picked the lock while no one was looking. Inside we found a Charm of Infinite Recall, cleaning rags and some clipped coppers.

Anze

The next table up was run by Anze. He sold weapons. Some of them were very potent, like the Club of Piercing, which Annah was able to make off with. Again this fellow was vigilant, so we moved off.

[For both of these shops I got lucky with Annah on my first try and then had countless failures. Annah's pickpocket skill was at 93 at the time and her dex was 19. These are just tough places to steal from.]

Lazlo

Nearby a young boy was moving about, tending a furnace, the son Anze had spoken of. He had a great deal of information about the area.

I asked why it was called the Lower Ward. He said it was because of all the portals leading to the Lower Planes that are riddled through it like cheese. I asked why were so many Lower Planes portals here. He said it was a mystery to him.

I asked if any creatures ever came out of them. He said yes and looked nervous. I asked if he'd seen this himself. He said it was just last week or so he saw a couple of Abishai come through. They talked a bit and one went back through. The one that stayed is still here.

I asked what they were talking about. He said he didn't know for sure, but he thought it was about the Tower. I asked about the Tower. He said that was one of the strangest sights in the Ward. No one knows how long it's been around. It's bolted up so no one can enter. The Abishai were gesturing at the Tower and the portal. He thought they were looking for the key.

I asked what key. He said the key to the portal that leads to the Tower. I said that maybe the key to getting in is not wanting to get in. I asked where the portal was located. He thought for a moment then told me of a drawbridge-like contraption back of the Tower, east of the market. That was where it is.

I asked him about the sights and he told me much information about the factions and the Foundry. He kindly marked some locations on my map.

I asked about the city of Sigil. He didn't know a lot but talked about how the Lady is the law. I asked what he could tell me about the Lady of Pain and he said he didn't know much about her. She keeps the Powers out of Sigil and will pen you in the Dead-Book quick if you worship her or try and hurt Sigil. Her face and the blades surrounding it would be the last sight you'd see.

I said that was interesting ... (500) At the mention of a face surrounded by blades a memory forced itself into my consciousness. I am standing in an alley. Approaching me in the darkness is an uncannily beautiful woman, her face shrouded in blades and with cold eyes ... then the memory faded and I was talking to the lad once more.

Cinder

Moving on through the market we came to Cinder, who looked as if his name was earned the hard way. He had heard of me, calling me the scarred clueless

fellow who'd been going around asking questions. I said he had a few scars himself.

He chortled and said he had. He was apparently caught up in the burning of the Alley of Dangerous Angles when Ignus got up to mischief. Cinder said he was laid up for a month.

I said that wasn't all that long. He said aye, it could have been worse, but a local mage had healed him. I asked if this mage could help me with my scars. He said he didn't see why not. He said the mage's name was Sebastion and his kip is over by the foundry.

Asking more questions I asked what this place was. He told me of the open air Market and said that if I was a merchant myself I could set up shop next to him, pointing to an empty stall next door. I asked why that stall was empty.

He said that a merchant named Zac had his kip there, but got himself a page in the Dead-Book. It was a strange story. I said strange in what way? He said he didn't know the dark of it all, but Zac had a bit of business trouble and needed some coin. He got a loan from Byron Pikit. After that Pikit started trying to take the business from him.

Not long after that Zac was a deader. Pikit took the widow to court to get the jink Zac owed. She claimed it had been paid and said she had the papers to prove it, but they turned up missing.

I asked what happened. He said that with no proof the business was sold and the widow Trist held responsible. She couldn't pay it so it's the block for her. I asked about the block. He said it was an auction block. You get sold into service for a few years as punishment. I asked where I could find the block. He said to head north from the Market.

I asked him about the missing papers. He said Pikit must be behind it. I asked where I could find Pikit. Cinder said he sets his kip up right outside the Market. Going back to what he'd said I asked if anyone was looking into this. He said the Harmonium was, but there was no evidence of wrongdoing. He said that Corvus, one of the guards around the Market is real interested in finding what happened to Zac. I asked where I could find Corvus. He said Corvus was usually by the west exit.

In addition to information, Cinder also had a good selection of spells, including several I had not seen before.

Corvus

As we left the Marketplace I stopped to talk to Corvus. I was about to speak to him regarding Zac and Pikit when I noticed that his attention was focused on a young lady wandering about the market. I turned to follow his gaze and then asked what he was looking at.

Corvus begged my pardon, but even as he did so his eyes wandered again to follow her about. He said that she had the voice of an angel and is such a pretty young thing. I suggested he go and talk to her. He said he just couldn't.

I asked if he knew Byron Pikit. He said yes. I asked Corvus what he could tell me about Pikit. He said that was Harmonium business, that he could not discuss it with me. Though he did say that if he knew me better that might change.

I asked about Zac. Again he said that was Harmonium business. He did say that Zac had been murdered and an investigation was being conducted.

Karina

It was she Corvus was eyeing so. I asked her about weapons and about magic. She was very free with her words and concerned not to give offense. When I noticed that she really liked to talk she said that people avoid her because she talks too much. She said she was lonely.

I said that I didn't think she was a bad person and that I happened to like her. (2000) She thanked me and asked my name. I said it was Adahn and bid farewell.

Corvus

He was still following Karina with his gaze, so I told him her name. He again talked of her voice and comely nature. I agreed and said that she was also lonely and would certainly welcome the company of a gentleman such as himself. (2000)

He excused himself for a moment and stepped around me, walking towards her. After a while he came back and, looking a little glassy-eyed said she was a wonderful young lady. I said it was my pleasure.

I asked him again about Byron and he said that officially he could tell me nothing. Unofficially he was suspected of being behind most of the criminal activity here at the Market. They also thought him guilty of the murder of Zac. I asked if there was anything else. He said that he would not be alone in a room with Pikit, nor turn his back on the man.

Byron Pikit

Emerging from the Marketplace I saw a well-dressed man in blue and white. I said greetings and he introduced himself as Byron Pikit, Moneylender. I asked about his profession. He said he catered to the needs of merchants.

I tried pretending to be a merchant, but he was having none of it so I asked him what this place was. He said it was the Lower Ward and this area particularly was the open-air Market.

I asked more about the Lower Ward. He said it was the home of the common people. Look about and you will see all that there is to see ... nothing. Nothing of any interest.

I said then why was he here? He said the one thing these mindless sods are good for is spending their money. I told him to go on. He said that where there is money you would also find merchants and thieves. He said he helped provide the merchants need to relieve them of their hard earned coin.

I asked who provided the thieves. He said it wasn't him, but gave me a calculating look and said why did I ask. I said to call it curiosity. **(2000)** He laughed and said curiosity can be dangerous if one isn't careful. He suggested I talk to Lenny who can usually be found south and east of the Market. He also said to tell Lenny Byron sent me.

Zerb

Outside the Market were three huge creatures, all over nine feet tall engaged in conversation. I walked up to one and said hello. He said that he did not speak language and that I should talk to Thorp.

Gort

Turns out Gort was no better at speaking common.

Thorp

I said hello and asked who he was. He said he was Thorp, a mighty warrior. All thokola are mighty warriors. He asked who I was. I said I was Adahn. He said that was a good name for a smallie. Thorp like.

I asked what they were doing here. He laughed and smiled at me. He said that he and his friends were going to bash a flying lizard, then let out a roar and pounded his chest with huge fists the size of hams.

I asked what flying lizard. He said lizard and made a crawling motion, but it fly. He then flapped his arms. I asked if he meant a dragon. He said Thorp good, but he not that good. Someday, but not this day.

I asked if it wasn't a dragon, then what was it. He said he didn't remember what Xanthia call it. It lizard, tall as Thorp. Walk on back legs, got wings, got claws, red in color. Think she say they called abbey shy? I hoped their fighting skills were better than their language abilities.

I said I'd heard of an Abishai. Was that what they meant? He said yes, Abishai. Thorp and friends bash real good. Thorp be warrior of stature then. Xanthia accept apology. I would pay good money to see this fight.

I asked what was this about Xanthia and an apology? He said he took friends to tavern last night. Thorp get stinking drunk, fall on Xanthia's table, spill drinks. Xanthia said she not accept apology unless Thorp be warrior of stature.

I said then killing an abishai is supposed to give you stature? He said Xanthia say so, but Thorp not know. I left these fellows to their “fun” and looked around for Xanthia.

Xanthia was just across the way, dressed in gray. She was watching the gang.

Xanthia

I said hello and asked who she was. She said her name was Xanthia. I asked what she was doing here and she said there was going to be a fight. I asked what fight. She said the three thokola over there were going to try to kill an abishai and called them stupid oafs.

I said I'd heard of an abishai, but what, exactly was it. She said it was a lower planes creature, a baatezu she thought. In any case, abishai have sharp claws and can cast spells.

I said that the thokola looked like they could take care of themselves. She said normally she would agree, however, she knew something they didn't. I asked what that might be. She said that abishai can only be hurt by magic so the thokola will be slaughtered, she had no doubt.

I asked how she knew this. She said her husband was very high up in the Harmonium and they are trained to deal with creatures such as that. I asked why she didn't warn the thokola? She said she was the one who suggested the fight.

I asked why. She said her husband tried to better his standing with his underlings by drinking with them in the local taverns. Last evening he forced her into joining such an occasion. Those three oafs were there, boasting of their

prowess. As they left one of them tripped and fell into the table she was sitting at.

I told her to go on. She frowned in anger saying that most of the drinks at the table spilled into her lap and ruined a very expensive gown. When he tried to apologize she said that she only accepted the apology of a warrior of stature. If he were truly such a warrior, he'd be able to defeat an abishai in hand-to-hand combat.

I asked if she was really going to get them killed because they ruined a dress? She said I obviously didn't understand the intricacies behind this situation. She said she was embarrassed and humiliated in front of her husband and his underlings. Seeing how adamant she was I left to confer again with the thokola.

Thorp

I said that I'd talked to Xanthia and that she said they were going to fight an abishai, correct? He said that was right. I warned him that abishai could only be hurt by magic weapons. **(6000)**

He gave me a worried look and asked how I knew. I said I'd talked to Xanthia and she'd told me that. I watched the chain of thought form on his face like a thunderstorm growing in the distance. He said she lied and played Thorp for a coney, try and get him and his friends dead. I said I was afraid so.

He said that Xanthia not deserve apology. Thorp free from debt. I agreed. He thanked me. After a moment of conferring with his friends they each handed me a pouch of coins. I thanked them. The coins totaled 600 common. He said I good friend. I deserve. I made my goodbyes.

Xanthia

As I walked up to her she gave me a look that should have put me in the Mortuary. She said I had warned them, hadn't I? I said yes, I did what I felt was right. (2000) She nodded her head and said she would not forget this insult. Some days it's good to be me.

Sebastion

A little north of where I met Xanthia I saw Sebastion, standing near some sort of portcullis. As I approached he greeted me and told me his name. After I greeted him in return he started to ask what he could do for me, but then saw my scars and said he saw why I came to see him.

I asked if he could help me with these scars. He smiled and said perhaps. Then he examined me. He said he could help. He could not cure, but he could alleviate the worst of it.

I asked his price. He said he had a job I could perform. I told him to go on. He said that he'd signed a contract with a certain creature, but he was no longer able to fulfill the contract. However, the creature would not release him.

I said, so let me guess: he wanted me to solve this problem for him? He said yes, that he could not do it himself. I asked what sort of creature he was talking about. He said it was an abishai named Grosuk. He said he knew this would be difficult, but he thought I was up to it and the reward he offered was great.

I asked what he had been contracted to do. He said he could not reveal that information. He was magically bound not to. I said it was an interesting proposal.

He asked if I would do it. I said yes, if he would give me the details. He gave me a relieved smile and thanked me. He told me I would need magic or magic weapons and that Grosuk could be found to the east, beyond the siege tower. I asked about the siege tower. He said it was over beyond the Market.

Business being dispensed with, I asked him to tell me about himself. He said he was a mage of sorts who does contract work. I asked why he hesitated to use the word mage. He said he was not a mage, but could perform the Art in his own way.

I asked what kind of work he did. He said confidential work. He was known for his discretion and for getting deeds done.

I asked about this ward. He said this was the Lower Ward, not the slums of the Hive, but it has no splendor such as the Lady's Ward. I asked why it was called the Lower Ward. He said that depended upon my point of view. The rich say it's because this is the home of the common classes. Those who live here say it's because of the portals ... and the incident.

I asked what incident. He said that a long time ago this was known as the Prime Ward. People new to the city were placed here and not allowed access to all of Sigil. There were many other restrictions as well. Some berk took offense to that and decided to form a rebellion. It went nowhere until he made a fascinating discovery.

I told him to go on. He said that most of the portals open onto the Lower Planes. That barmy berk found a way to open them all at once. He allowed anything that wanted to come through the portals. It became quite bloody and a terrible war ensued.

I asked him how this person opened all the gates. He said that the fellow used an item that he either had commissioned or made himself. As Sebastion remembered it was called the Shadow-Sorcelled Key.

At the mention of the key I began to feel dizzy and everything turned gray. I felt a memory trying to force its way into my consciousness. I relaxed and let it come. (500) The world faded and I found myself in the streets of Sigil. My heart was pounding, trying to break free of my chest. I'd been running for hours and could not stop.

I turned a corner and entered an alley, finally slowing. As I leaned against a wall I became aware of something hard pressed into the palm of my hand. Glancing down I opened my clenched fist to stare at the gem embedded in my flesh.

My body sagged into the wall. I forced myself to take slow, deep breaths. Then I heard a faint noise and snapped to full awareness. I looked towards the alley mouth.

I saw nothing at first, but then as I was about to turn away a slight movement caught my eye. Slowly a female form glided around the corner paused and then turned to face me. Her face was enshrouded by blades. Even in the darkness I could see her cold, emotionless eyes.

The memory faded and my normal vision returned. I asked what became of the Shadow-Sorcelled Key. He said that no one knew. The key had been lost for some time now and many believed the Lady took the key to prevent it being used again.

I asked how the rebellion turned out. He said everyone, except the leader was given pages in the dead-book. The leader and creatures just vanished.

Because of the fumes from the Lower Planes the ward remained deserted until the Foundry was eventually built.

An'azi

Setting off to find Grosuk we passed by the Godsmen hall. Standing to one side of the gate was a gith who seemed very ill, An'azi

It turned out she was a gith, so Dak'kon had to translate. She told him she was dying. I asked what she was dying of. Dak'kon told me her name and said that she used to work in a meat-curing house until a half-month ago when the illness became too much for her to bear. She had been evicted from her home and left for dead.

Dak'kon seemed to leave something unsaid. I waited. He said she will not recover and that he could put her out of her misery, but that is all. As a zerth it was his responsibility to provide an alternative.

I told him to do what he must, but be merciful. She touched the Unbroken Circle Dak'kon wore and prepared herself for a moment. Then he struck and it was done.

Deran

Going on we came to what looked like a slave auction. There were 4 Harmonium guards and a number of future slaves as well as an auctioneer.

I bid greetings to the fellow. He said from looking at me that I might need healing charms. I asked if he had any, he said no, but don't let that stop me.

I asked if he sold slaves. Again he said no, that these were indentured servants. And were mostly here because of small crimes. After their debt is paid they would be free again. I said it still sounded like slavery to me.

He said he didn't concern himself with such thoughts. I asked if they were guilty of crimes, what were the crimes. He said he didn't know, but it was likely for theft, assault or not being able to pay their debts.

He had a general knowledge of the area and after getting directions to the siege tower we left.

Yi'minn

Walking near the auction I saw a man dressed in carmine and moss-brown leather. Dak'kon stopped me before I spoke to him, saying that he would caution me before I spoke to this githyanki.

I asked what a githyanki was. He said that githyanki and githzerai were once of common stock, all slaves of the illithids. Then the warrior-queen Gith led us to victory against the illithids and they escaped. They have waged war on the illithids ever since.

However, there was disagreement over the future of the People. Upon the Blasted Plains Zerthimon made the Pronouncement of Two Skies. One race became two. It is a rift that cannot be crossed peacefully. I took his word for now and left the githyanki alone.

Trist

Near the auction a young woman was waving at us to attract our attention. She said she was in need of a mercenary. If appearances were any indication I would fit the bill.

I said that appearances could be deceptive. She asked forgiveness and said she was in a situation of desperation.

I asked what exactly she wanted of me. She said the heart of the matter was that she is to be sold into slavery for a crime she did not commit. She said she was in need of a champion, someone who will help her prove her innocence and free her from this fate.

I asked her to tell me exactly what was going on. She said this was long in the telling, but I told her to go on.

She said her husband had died recently and left her his business. She was not business oriented and decided to sell. Not long after she was contacted by a lender who said there was a loan outstanding.

She said she had examined all the documents her husband kept and found that there had indeed been a loan, but it had just recently been paid in full. When the lender asked for a copy of this document it was nowhere to be found.

When she could not prove that the loan was paid the lender took her before the court. Since she could not prove the loan had been paid her moneys were applied to the loan. Since that did not pay off the loan she was to be sold on the auction block.

I asked why she would be sold into slavery. She said it served many purposes. It kept the prisons clear of all but the worst criminals. Second, the sale of the

convict helps pay for any damages, cost, or fees. And last, it serves as a sentence from which they are eventually released.

I said all this was fascinating, but I didn't see how I could help her. She said that she needed someone to find the missing document or I could purchase her contract and she could pay me back. She said that she couldn't spend 5 years in this ward; it would kill her because of the illness.

I asked if she meant the yellow skin and coughing. She said yes and please, could I find it in my heart to help her. I said I would help, but had some questions.

I asked what was the lender's name. She said it was Byron Pikit and his associate Lenny. I asked who Lenny was. She said he was a small, feral man. She remembered him because he always seemed to be uncomfortable in his clothes.

I asked where I could find Lenny. She said she was not sure, but somewhere southeast of the Market, near the siege tower.

She said I should talk to Deran about her contract.

I asked if someone could have stolen the document. She said that it made little sense to her because they left all her valuables.

I said that maybe the lender stole the document so that she'd pay for the loan twice. She looked shocked and said that was a terrible thought, but also an ingenious one. She also said that Bryon did strike her as a knight of the post.

I asked what that was. She said they were a thief or a cheat.

After that we left.

Warehouse

I went into this building and Morte and Annah started at it again.

There was this strange, floating head with big spikes in the center of the room. He, or it, bid me welcome and asked how he could serve me.

I asked what this place was. He said it was the Vaults of the Ninth World and it served as a warehouse for the Lower Ward.

I asked what he was. He said he was the voice of the Vault and was there to serve me, the customer.

I asked why it was called the Vault of the Ninth World? He said he had no idea, but thought it was the owner's choice.

I asked if this place was as big as a world. He said no; that was just marketing.

I said that I would like to claim something. He asked what I wanted to claim. I said I was looking for a large bag of coins. He said that they have a bag and all I had to do was to tell him how much was in it. I said 1123 coins. It just felt right, somehow. He gave it to me and thanked me for storing my goods there.

I said I wanted to store something, but he said he was full up. I reminded him that this was supposed to be a huge storehouse. He said it was, only they ran out of space and there's something a little fishy going on around there and he didn't know what it was. The gist of it was that they don't accept items for storage anymore.

Leena

In the back of the warehouse were several people. I walked up to one of them and she asked if she could help me. I asked who she was. She said she was Leena and she supervised the other two.

I asked what she did. She said this was a storehouse and she was the supervisor. Things get stored, they get taken out ... I gave her my thanks and left.

Conall

I went up to the next fellow who was all dressed in a strange, tan garb. He asked what I wanted. I asked who he was. He said his name was Conall and he worked there.

I asked what this place was and he told me. I thanked him and moved on to the next bloke.

Otis

I asked who he was. He said no talk me, talk Leena. I said not even a few questions? He said NO TALK ME. OK, I get the message. Geez.

Feeling richer, if none the wiser, we left.

Print Shop

We went in the Print Shop for Giltspur.

Scofflaw Penn

He was a busy man and asked what we wanted. I asked who he was. He said his name was Penn and was quite annoyed at our interruption.

I asked what he printed. He said books, pamphlets, etc.

I asked if he wrote the note that I found in the Mortuary. He said someone had been defaming his good name. I asked if he wasn't worried about that. He asked why would he be? He said he had a good idea of who it was and had a surprise in store for them. I asked if I could help. He said of course not.

I then gave him the handbill and he said he'd have it for Giltspur later. I said farewell.

Grosuk

Where two portcullises met I saw Grosuk. I said hello and he started the hissing, hotplate thing again, like they all do. I told him that Sebastian had sent me.

He cooled off a bit and quit hissing as much. He said I should give him information. I asked what information. He looked annoyed or maybe it was just indigestion. The air was heating up.

He said no question. Give information or die, then he would take the information from body. I said that I needed to know which piece of information was for him, since I run so many errands.

He glared at me and then said he wanted to know how to get inside the siege tower. I said that that information Sebastian wanted to deliver himself, and that he would be along soon.

I was sweating and he was glowing. He said that he thought I was lying and to give him the information now and he would kill me quick, not give information and he would take his time.

I said that I knew something that might be worth my life, but personally I was hoping I could just whack him and get it over with. He said that if my information was good he'd let me live. Well, that was damn decent of him.

I asked how did I know he'd keep his word. He said he lived by word of pact; now tell him. I decided I liked killing him better and said that I was here to kill him anyway ...

He hissed and spit and we fought. He landed a couple of good blows, but then Morte started in taunting him and all he could see was red. We put him down quickly then. He only had a few coppers on him.

[You can get out of having to kill Grosuk by telling him that Sebastion had sent me to kill Grosuk, but doing that gets Sebastion killed. No +2 to charisma and no 4000 experience. Also, I just didn't like him.]

Sebastion

We went back to collect our reward. He asked if I was ready to begin and I said yes. **(Charisma increased +2 permanently, 4000)**

I returned to him and asked if he could train me in the Art. He said that wasn't something he normally did, but he would. I thanked him. **(4000)**

Coffin Maker

There were several coffins inside the shop. In 3 of them I found a number of coppers and some bandages. Hey, it's not like they're paying me for this.

Hamrys

Hamrys was a hearty man who gave me a friendly greeting, so I shook his hand. He said that he thought he knew me. I told him my name was Adahn. This rang a bell. He said I looked like I was in desperate need of a coffin.

He had a great deal to say about the Lady and the Lower Ward.

I asked who his friend was. He said his name was Dimtree. Dimtree wandered in a few days back and had been a regular ever since. He hadn't bought anything, but he doesn't cause trouble so Hamrys let him stay.

I said that I had heard his father died and could he tell me what happened? He said he disappeared some time ago so he could only assume his father was dead. He asked where I heard this. I said I didn't recall, but did he say his father disappeared?

He said yes, many years ago. His father was a stonemason, skilled in constructing sarcophagi and tomb design. People from across Sigil ...

A memory tugged at me ... I relaxed and tried to remember. **(500)** I found myself in this same shop, talking with an older man while I child sat in the corner and played. On the counter was a set of plans. The man was explaining some intricacies of the construction of a tomb. My vision faded as I focused on the plans.

When my sight returned I was standing in a cavern in front of a tomb. Above the entry I saw the slogan: Engineered for Eternity. The old man was next to me, smiling. He gestured to me and walked into the tomb. I matched his pace from behind and drew my blade ...

I wasn't a very good boy, then. I came back to myself in Hamrys' shop and found him staring at me.

I asked what happened to his father. He said that he just vanished. It took a long while to get out of the debt caused by his disappearance and to some extent Hamrys was still settling his father's accounts.

He said that his father's disappearance was why he joined the Harmonium—and why he left it. He had a desire to find out what happened, but then felt an obligation to carry on his father's work. He said he never found the answers he sought.

I asked if his father kept any plans for the tombs he built. He said that he did. After Hamrys came of age and inherited the business he went through all of his father's records. Why did I ask?

I asked if he could tell me if a tomb was his father's work if I described it to him? He said he could try. I described the tomb from memory. He said there was little doubt that his father did the work. The slogan had been the family trademark for generations. He asked where it was located.

I described the location. I told him in great detail, surprised that I could remember it so well. He said that he didn't recall anything in the family records that would even have permitted him to build a tomb there. The Dustmen are very careful about building rights.

I asked if he recognized the location. He said yes, it sounded like the Drowned Nations Catacombs. I said that I needed to know if his father kept any plans for that tomb.

He said yes, that the warehouse where he stored his goods handles his business documents as well, but they've been having internal problems and because of that he hadn't been able to restock and he doubted he could retrieve any paperwork from them, either. He asked if I would look into the matter for him.

I asked about the warehouse. He said the Harmonium would never let things get so out of hand. I said I guess I'd have to if I wanted the plans. He smiled and said if I could deal with this I could have the plans for free. I said I'd get started on it right away.

Dimtree

As I said greetings he turned just enough to acknowledge my presence. He looked gaunt and pale. I asked if he was all right. He stared at me and slowly nodded. I almost turned away, but noticed a strange, musty odor. I stepped closer and sniffed.

Ah yes, an old favorite from the Mortuary. He smelled like dead flesh preserved by magic. I asked him if he was a zombie. He continued to stare at me. Then, with great effort, he replied, saying yes and telling me his name.

I asked why he was here. He made a feeble gesture towards Hamrys. He said that Hamrys talked. Never stopped. Wandered town. Annoyed Master; annoyed everyone. Master created Dimtree. Tell Dimtree talk Hamrys. Now Hamrys stayed in shop. Master happy. Town happy. Dimtree sad ...

I asked if I could do anything to help. He asked me to find Master Sebastian and ask him to release Dimtree. Please. I asked why couldn't I put him out of his misery?

He said no, Master would revive. Must ask Master. Please ...

I said that I would see what I could do. Dimtree thanked me. I said farewell.

Warehouse

We went into the Warehouse since it was on the way to see Sebastian.

Vault

I said that I was told I could retrieve some plans for a tomb there. He gave them to me and asked if there was anything else. I said no and farewell.

I talked to everyone, but no one seemed to know how to restore the Warehouse to proper operation.

Sebastian

After greeting him I told him I wanted to talk to him about Dimtree. He asked what about Dimtree. I told him Dimtree wanted to be released from his curse.

He gave me a surprised look and said he found that hard to believe. He asked if Hamrys put me up to this. I told Sebastian to think about it. Hamrys didn't know Dimtree was a zombie, let alone who created him.

He said I was right, of course. He said Dimtree was more aware than he intended. I asked if he would release him.

He looked at me with conflicting emotions and said he could not, that he was sorry. He fulfilled a contract by creating Dimtree and he could not break it, right or wrong.

I asked if I could release him instead. He said that would be difficult and that it would be tantamount to his breaking his words through the actions of another.

I had a moment where I could have read the necessary incantation while he was rummaging through his records, but I chose not to. I asked him again about Dimtree and asked if I could talk to whoever contracted him and get them to agree to release Dimtree.

He said he was magically bound not to reveal such information. I was fed up and said that I didn't give a rat's arse about contracts. What he did was wrong and Dimtree needed to be freed.

Again he said that would be difficult. This time as he went through his records I read the incantation and left.

Coffin Maker

Dimtree

I told Dimtree that I knew how to release him. I spoke the words Sebastian taught me. (4000) I told him to rest well. As he collapsed I thought I heard "Thank you, friend" as he fell.

Hamrys

He asked if I had the plans. I said yes, that I'd dealt with the situation at the warehouse and got the plans. **(2000)** He said well done and thanked me for my help.

[I'll save you a long, long trip. If you wander all the way back to the tomb in the Drowned Nations all it does is tell you how to get out of the tomb. No experience or anything.]

Lenny

North and west of Hamrys' shop I saw a feral-looking young man in shoddy clothes. He eyed me warily as I approached. I gave him greetings.

He looked me up and down and said that I'd better have a good reason to disturb him. I said I had some questions. He said he wasn't a tout. I said what if I told him Byron Pikit had sent me?

He stopped smiling and examined me. Looking at my scars he swallowed and then asked why.

I told him Pikit said he could answer some questions. He asked what questions. I said I was interested in thieving and asked if he would teach me. He asked if I wanted to give up being a fighter and I said yes.

He said to show him what I knew and he'd give me some pointers. **(2500)** I thanked him. He smiled at me and gave me a pair of punch daggers as a gift. They were the Punch Daggers of Zar'Anun. I thanked him again and said farewell.

I went back to Lenny and asked him about the papers he stole from Trist. He swallowed hard and stared at me looking ready to run. He said I didn't know what I was talking about.

I gave him my best wicked smile and told him he knew what I was talking about, that I was here to collect the papers Byron had him steal from Trist. (1000)

I said really Lenny? Then why was he so nervous? I said Byron thinks he destroyed the papers, but he didn't.

He stared at me and then ran for it. I grabbed him before he got away. He struggled for a moment, but couldn't match my strength. He said all right, he'd give them to me, just let him go.

I asked why he kept them, blackmail? He said no, he kept them so he could turn stag on my boss Pikit and keep Trist off the block.

I asked what he meant by turn stag. He said he may be a thief, but he had some standards. He wouldn't kill and he wouldn't do what Pikit did to Trist and her husband. He said he told my boss what he was doing was wrong and Pikit laughed at him.

I said that Pikit wasn't my boss. He stared at me like I'd grown another head. He said I'd given him the peel so he'd spill the chant. He said good job.

I said we should go get the papers. He said we couldn't because they were in the warehouse and they weren't open for business. He said that was why he hadn't helped Trist himself.

I said I'd look into it myself. He said I should go to the warehouse and tell them I was there for a loan and they'd hand over the papers. If I told them I gave Pikit the laugh I'd get a bonus.

I asked what bonus. **(4000)** He said it was evidence that would take Pikit off the street for a long time. He said if there was someone in the Harmonium I could trust, give the papers to him. I said all right and bid farewell.

Warehouse

Once more we set off for the Warehouse.

Vault

I told Vault that I gave Pikit the laugh to get the loan papers and the evidence against Pikit.

Byron Pikit

I thought I would go play a bit with Byron. I told him I wanted to talk about Trist. He asked what about her? I said I was trying to find a missing document for her. He sighed and said that there was no missing document; that the matter had been thoroughly investigated by the Mercykillers and they found no evidence of such a document.

I said that they could have missed something. **(1000)** He said that was possible, though not very likely. I said that someone could have stolen the document and then destroyed it ...

He looked furious for a moment, and then a gloating smile appeared. He said that was a “terrible” thought and pity there was no proof.

I said yes, it was a pity. Then I asked why have Trist sold into slavery? Couldn’t she have paid him his money in the form of a loan? He said she could and he did make that offer to her. However, she turned him down.

Apparently he’d had enough of me. He then told me to pike off. Having had enough fun and games I went to see Corvus.

Market

Corvus

I thought Corvus would be just the man to give Pikit what he deserved, so we went off to Market.

He greeted me as a friend and said he hoped I was doing well. I asked how he was getting on with Karina. His grin grew even broader. He said they were doing very well thanks to me.

I asked if he knew Lenny. He said yes. I asked what he could tell me about Lenny. He said nothing, officially, but off the record Lenny was a master thief, but had ethics. I asked if there was anything else. He said he would not be afraid to turn his back to Lenny.

Talking about Pikit I told him I had evidence the proved he was involved in criminal acts in Sigil. He asked if he could see the evidence, so I gave him the papers. (2000)

He examined them thoroughly, then folded them and put them away. He said that he would personally see to it that Pikit was taken before the courts.

Karina

I bumped into Karina. As she saw me she gave me a big smile and thanked me for what I did for her. I asked what I did. (500) She said I had sent Corvus her way. She knew because he told her so. Then she gave me a hug. I said she was welcome and wished them happiness. She thanked me again and I left.

Deran

I told him I wanted to talk to him about Trist. He said very well, what about her? I said that I had proof that she was innocent of any crime. He laughed and said very well, show him the evidence. I gave him the document. (4000)

He looked at it, sighed, then folded the document and put it inside his shirt. He said that the courts owe the Lady Trist an apology. From this moment she is free. I thanked him. He thanked me.

Trist

She smiled and said I was her savior. I said I was happy to help her. She thanked me again and then paused. After a moment she said that I had saved her from a slow, painful death. She asked me to wait and she would return shortly. I said all right.

When she returned she thanked me for waiting, then removed a purse from the folds of her dress. She said the courts would restore her status and finances, so

she gave the purse to me. She said that wasn't much, but it was well deserved. 1,000 coppers was certainly something, so I thanked her and left.

Yi'imm

I had seen this fellow walking about the Ward as I ran my errands. I went up to speak to him, but Dak'kon asked me not to. I asked why. He said that they were githyanki and that if we spoke blades would be drawn. I honored his wish and we went on.

[If you insist on speaking to the githyanki you will end up fighting every githyanki in the Ward. I chose to wait and see if this would make any more sense later.]

Siege Tower

We went to the area where Grosuk fell to see if we could find the portal the boy Lazlo had spoken of. When we got there I killed any desire to enter the tower and a portal appeared.

We stepped through the portal into a huge chamber and stood upon a catwalk. I found myself holding my breath. In the chamber an enormous metal man, several times my height, struck blow after blow with a hammer that would make two of me. It sounded like an iron giant's heart slowly beating.

Walking up to him on the catwalk I realized that he was built into the tower. His lower half formed the forge itself. I knew it for a golem, and said greetings.

As he turned to speak to me metal screamed in agony. It must have been years and years since he last had company. I asked what he was. He answered in the voice of a hundred ancient bells tolling.

"I AM IRON GIVEN PURPOSE."

I asked what purpose.

"I FORGE THE IMPLEMENTS BY WHICH THE MULTIVERSE WILL BE UNMADE."

Cheerful fellow, I thought. I asked if he meant he was forging weapons.

"METAL IS LIKE FLESH. BOTH CARRY POTENTIAL IN THEIR VEINS. WHEN TEMPERED WITH HEAT AND PRESSURE, THE POTENTIAL SURFACES. MY PURPOSE IS TO BRING FORTH THIS POTENTIAL. ALLOW IT EXPRESSION."

I asked whom he was doing this for.

"BEYOND THIS TOWER ORDER RALLIES ITS LEGIONS. THE MULTIVERSE HEALS ITS WOUNDS."

I asked why the multiverse was his enemy.

"THE MULTIVERSE GROWS. IT FORGES CHAINS AROUND THE PLANES LINK BY LINK. IN TIME EVEN ENTROPY MAY BE CHAINED."

I asked if he was opposed to chaining entropy.

"WHEN A THING SEALS ITSELF AGAINST ITS OWN DESTRUCTION, IT MERELY DIES A DIFFERENT DEATH."

Wow, I bet this guy is fun at parties. I asked what made that death worse than another.

“ALL THINGS HAVE A COMMON GROUND IN DECAY. WAR IS NECESSARY. DEATH IS NECESSARY. DECAY IS NECESSARY.”

I said these things might be necessary within limits.

“THERE ARE NO LIMITS. LIMITS ARE ONE OF THE LINKS IN THE CHAIN OF ORDER. LIMITS MUST BE SHATTERED.”

I asked what if death is the result, but he wasn't having any of it.

“ALL MUST FALL UPON ENTROPY'S BLADE. ORDER WILL BE PUT TO THE SWORD. ITS CHAINS WILL BE BROKEN.”

I asked what this place was.

“THIS TOWER IS A SIEGE ENGINE. IT EXISTS TO BREACH THE WALLS BETWEEN PLANES.”

I asked how.

“THE TOWER ANCHORS ITSELF UPON A PLANE. A WOUND IS TORN IN THE MULTIVERSE WHEN THE BRIDGE OF THE TOWER OPENS. LEGIONS MAY PASS FROM ONE PLANE TO ANOTHER THROUGH THE TOWER.”

I asked what happened to the legions that had used the tower.

“ENTROPY HAS UNMADE THEM.”

Entropy doesn't have much of a retirement plan. I asked what happened to the planes the siege tower invaded?

"ENTROPY HAS UNMADE THEM."

I asked if he could do anything with my weapons.

"SHOW ME WHAT YOU HAVE BROUGHT. I WILL STUDY ITS POTENTIAL AND SEE IF ITS PAIN CAN BE GIVEN EXPRESSION."

I said very well. He'd been a busy little golem. He had a wide selection of weapons including several expensive magical weapons.

I asked why he remained here if the siege tower could travel the planes.

"THE TOWER IS TRAPPED IN THIS CITY. THIS CITY IS A CAGE THAT IT CANNOT BREACH."

I asked how the siege tower got into the city in the first place.

"AT ONE TIME THE TOWER LAID SIEGE TO THE PLANES. HOW I WAS BROUGHT HERE IS NOT KNOWN TO ME. HOW I MAY ESCAPE IS NOT KNOWN TO ME."

I asked if he had heard of a night hag named Ravel.

"THE NIGHT HAG SOUGHT TO SUNDER THIS CITY. HER GREATEST WORKS WERE THOSE OF UNMAKING. SHE WALKED THE PATH OF ENTROPY."

I asked what happened to her.

“ORDER SET CHAINS ABOUT HER. SHE WAS CAST WITHIN A CAGE.”

I asked if he knew where this cage was.

“HER PRISON IS UNKNOWN TO ME.”

Having mined that subject for all it was worth, I asked if he could tell me more of what he did with weapons. He spoke of their potential again. I asked why he did this.

“THE IRON OF MY BODY ONCE EXISTED ONLY AS MINOR EXPRESSIONS OF PAIN. BLADES. SPEARS. AXES. ARROWHEADS. RIVETS IN CATAPULTS. FROM THESE IMPLEMENTS OF WAR WAS I WROUGHT.”

I asked what happened.

“THESE MINOR EXPRESSIONS OF PAIN WERE MELTED TO FORGE THIS BODY. MY POTENTIAL WAS ALLOWED TO SURFACE. NOW MY PURPOSE IS TO BRING OUT THE POTENTIAL IN OTHER METALS.”

I asked who had melted those weapons and forged his body.

“ENTROPY RAISED ME FROM THE PLANAR BATTLEFIELDS.”

Again we spoke of who he was, his purpose, whom he forged weapons for and why Entropy needed weapons. I asked why the multiverse was his enemy, why he was opposed to chaining Entropy. He repeated that what seals itself against its own destruction merely died a different death.

I asked if he was saying that immortality is just a different kind of death.

"IMMORTALITY IS JUST A WORD. ALL THAT EXISTS CAN DIE."

I asked if he was saying he could forge a weapon to kill an immortal.

"EVERY LIVING THING HAS A WEAPON AGAINST WHICH IS HAS NO DEFENSE. TIME. DISEASE. IRON. GUILT."

I asked how he knew what weapon to use.

"ONE MUST KNOW THE ENEMY TO FORGE SUCH A WEAPON."

I asked how I do that.

"START WITH A FRAGMENT OF THE ENEMY."

I asked what if your enemy strikes from a distance, from shadows and never shows himself.

"THEN THAT IS THE FRAGMENT OF THE ENEMY YOU MUST USE."

I said how?

"THE ACTIONS OF YOUR ENEMY HAVE TOLD YOU MUCH. YOUR ENEMY DOES NOT WISH TO ENGAGE YOU DIRECTLY. THAT IS ITS WEAKNESS."

I suggested that for some reason it might not be able to engage me directly.

"THAT IS AN EQUAL POSSIBILITY. EITHER REVEALS WEAKNESS."

I asked how I would exploit that.

"IF THE ENEMY DOES NOT WISH TO CONFRONT YOU DIRECTLY, DENY ITS WISH. TAKE THE BATTLE TO THE ENEMY."

I asked what if the reason it can't attack me directly is because it has no choice?

"IF IT IS NOT ALLOWED TO CONFRONT ME DIRECTLY, FIND THE REASON. THE REASON WILL REVEAL A WEAKNESS."

I asked if he could make a weapon that would kill me.

"YES."

I said really, how?

"I WOULD NEED A DROP OF YOUR BLOOD."

I said very well and received the Blade of the Immortal. (10000)

"THE TOOL OF YOUR DESTRUCTION HAS BEEN FORGED AND EDUCATED. IT IS NOT ENOUGH."

I asked what he meant.

"THE MAGICKS THAT KEEP YOUR HEART BEATING AND MEND YOUR FLESH ARE STRONG. YOU MUST SINK THE BLADE INTO YOUR BODY ONLY WITHIN A SHELL WHERE YOU ARE CUT OFF FROM THE PLANES."

I asked why.

"THE REASON IS NOT KNOWN TO ME. YET BOTH THE WEAPON AND THE PLACE ARE NECESSARY FOR YOUR DESTRUCTION."

I asked where I would find such a shell.

"THAT IS NOT KNOWN TO ME."

So far, I'd been going along for the ride, but I wasn't sure how I felt about remaining dead. Though not having any more headaches has its appeal. We left him to his task and left the tower.

Great Foundry

Having passed this building several times I thought it time we investigated it. As we approached the gate I greeted the guard.

I asked what the place was.

He said I was in front of the Great Foundry, home to the Believers of the Source.

I asked who that was. He said they were known as the Godsmen. I asked why this was. He said they believe that every being has within it the spark of divinity and that all life has a purpose and a goal. I said that sounded important.

It turned out that the only way in would be to place or pick up an order. To pick up an order I would need a receipt, which I couldn't provide, nor could I slide past him by lying.

Kii'na

We met Kii'na as she walked near the exit to the Alley of Lingerin Sighs. As we approached her, her gaze focused on Dak'kon. Dak'kon said it was his will that we not speak to her. I asked why not? He told me she was a zerth. That he had no common ground with her. I honored him and let her be.

I asked Dak'kon to leave us for a brief time. I wished to speak to the githyanki and I did not wish him to know this.

Yi'minn

As I approached he asked if I sought my memories. He said there was but a small price to pay for peace of mind.

I asked him to tell me more of his people. He said that the answers might be contained in my lost memories. I asked what was involved. He said that if he was to bait his hook for my memories he would need some of the memories I currently possessed. He also needed a place of quiet. If I followed him he would take me to one such, but I would have to leave my companions behind. I agreed.

We made our way to a deserted area of the ward and several githyanki appeared. Yi'minn's mood became ugly and he demanded that I tell them what I had done for the githzerai.

[Whatever you say here gets you into a fight. Must be my aftershave.]

I said I had merely relieved a githzerai's pain. They said that I lied and attacked me. I surrendered and let them kill me.

As consciousness left me I heard them speaking of a plan to take the fortress Vristigor. They would gather in Limbo for the assault.

Dak'kon

I went back so that Dak'kon could rejoin our party.

Giltspur

I told him the handbill was printed. **(6000)** He said that was terrific and asked me to take a message to Keldor of Durian at the Foundry. He said there were a hundred coins in it for me.

Great Foundry

I told the guard I had a message for Keldor from Giltspur. He said I would find him in the Great Godsmen Hall and opened the gate.

Inside a great number of people were milling about a large, circular room in blast-furnace heat, shouting to be heard over the constant din of smiths and machinery.

Nadilin

In an office away from some of the heat and noise was Nadilin, an old man with a cunning face. He asked if he knew me and said I seemed familiar to him.

I asked if he remembered from where he had seen me. He said not so fast, lad. It takes a while for the mind to warm up to a task like this. Under my breath I muttered, "Tell me about it, lad."

I asked if he could tell me who he was. That, at least, should still be “fresh.” He said he was Nadilin, Godsmen fighter. At least, he used to be. Now he was a clerk.

I said I wanted to pick up some gear for a forge. He listed the items I would need, but told me it would be 50 coppers instead of 40, which would be correct. I said I was sorry, but that sounded more like 40 coppers to me. He said of course it was. I told him to give me the stuff.

He told me I should pick up some ore from Thildon if I wanted to work the forge.

Thildon

I saw him moving about the foundry shouting orders. Just as I approached he said something harsh to a smith and then cuffed him. He turned to me and demanded to know what I wanted. I said that I needed to use the forge and asked for some ore. He told me to take the ore and don't get in the way.

He went off, but I caught him up and asked who he was, exactly. He said he was called Thildon the Grey, supervisor for this yard. I asked why they called him the Grey. He said it was because he was covered in soot from the furnaces. His workers had given him the nickname out of affection, no doubt.

I said seriously, no doubt. He seemed defensive and said that's right, they do. They know if they don't they'll get what's coming to them. I asked did he mean like the smith got what was coming to him? He paled for a moment and said that was just a figure of speech.

I asked him to tell me about the Godsmen and he went off on a monologue about their beliefs and how close he felt to being a god, how he was a favorite of the factol's and that he was further along than most. That gave him the right to

act like a god and expect total devotion from his inferiors. When he ruled the cosmos he'd remember every one of the berks who got in the way.

Nothing like taking something to heart. I said that I saw his point and left.

Alissa Tield

I saw a short woman with small horns roaming about and greeted her. I asked who she was. She said she was Alissa Tield, supervisor for this area of the foundry. She said that the foundry was much larger than this, but because of a large contract they had been sworn to secrecy, so most of the place was off limits.

I said I would like the tour. She said that she was too busy and that I should come back in a year or so. When I asked what was going on she said that they'd taken a huge and very secret contract. I shouldn't ask about it, because she wouldn't tell me.

I asked about the Godsmen and she told me of their beliefs. I asked how I could join. She said I should speak to Keldor of Durian and gave me directions.

I then asked to use the forge. She said certainly, if I had the proper items.

I asked about the guarded room in the back and she said I would need to talk to Keldor about that.

Godsman Hall

We entered and found ourselves in an ornate room with many guards. There were stairs up and a great staircase, also.

Sarossa

Walking about was a young woman. As I approached she stared directly at me. I had the uncomfortable feeling she was looking into my soul, if I still had one. She asked how my day went. I said it went well enough and could I ask her some questions.

She asked what answers I sought, calling me a half-man. I asked why she said that. She said it was because she could not see my spirit. All other mortals who passed through her life showed their spirits to her. I showed nothing at all. She said she could not say whether it was because I had no soul or had transcended.

I asked who she was. She said she was Sarossa, daughter of Sandoz, one of the factors of the Godsmen.

I asked her to tell me about her family. She said that her brother Saros was a child of the Foundry, yet she feared he had never embraced the philosophy of the Believers. Her father was a factor here and his travels had led into realms most mortals never even dream of achieving.

I asked for more of her brother. She said the he was brash and impulsive, easily given over to his manhood, eager to prove himself the equal of anything, full of aggression. She thought he felt himself more a Sensate than Godsmen, vindicating her belief that the Sensates are the most immature of all the factions on Sigil.

I asked why they were the most immature. She said that they, like children, do not understand that there is more beyond the world of the senses. I thanked her for her candor and left.

We entered the hall, a large circular room with benches. There were a great number of people standing about and a lesson seemed to be in progress. At a dais was an ornately dressed man.

Saros

A young man was walking about the hall so we went up to him. I asked him to tell me about himself. He said he was Saros and had grown up around here. He said he liked everyone here except for Thildon who said that Saros hadn't been raised right.

I asked about the people here. He said that they mean well, but they're all so earnest and boring and that they needed to liven up, like the Sensates. I asked if he liked the Sensates.

He said that they know how to live; they know what it's all about. The Godsmen keep pretending there's some big noble purpose to it all, but he didn't see it. He said that his sister said that life is more than our senses show, but he didn't see how she knew that, since all she knew was through her senses. I asked who his sister was. He said her name was Sarossa.

Keldor

I walked up to the man at the dais who greeted me in a friendly fashion. I asked who he was. He said he was Keldor, nominally in charge of the Foundry while the higher-ups are in conclave.

I told him that I had a message from Giltspur. He took the note and asked if there was anything else.

I said I would like to see the secret project. He said that he couldn't do that until I proved myself a friend to the Godsmen.

I asked about the faction. He was a wealth of information.

I asked him how I could join the Godsmen. He said I would have to renounce my Dustmen affiliation.

I did and then asked what I had to do. He said I had to complete three quests. First I had to forge an item. He told me to talk to Alissa.

Bedai-Lihn

I saw a woman up on the balcony and went to speak with her. I asked who she was. Her name was Bedai-Lihn and she was a magical engineer. She wanted to make sure that the Godsmen didn't get a chance to use that weapon or contract for other weapons of war again.

She had a good deal to say about the people there, though she claimed that she hadn't made any effort to get to know them.

Small Dwellings

Off of the Hall balcony were several libraries or conference rooms. Though we searched there wasn't anything of interest in them.

Sarossa

Leaving the Hall I stopped for a moment to talk to Sarossa again. I asked her about her talent. She explained her talent and where she thought it came from.

I asked if she could teach me the skill. She said that she could change me, but could not teach me, if the price was right.

I asked what the price was. She asked if I believed as the Godsmen do. I said that I didn't know enough to tell her. She said if I joined the faction fully she could help me. I said farewell.

[I should say that at this point I went off to sell the Death of Desire and ran into a problem. Every time I tried to enter the market the game crashed back to the desktop. In case this happens to you, know that I was able to continue by following the instructions in the FAQ at the Planescape website. I deleted the contents of both the cache and temp folders and restarted my system. Then everything was OK.]

In the forge area I saw an empty kettle, so I set to work. The heat was incredible and I quickly stripped to just the apron and shorts. I picked up the ore with the tongs and held it in the flame. It softened quickly and I placed the ore on the forge to work it into shape. I decided to forge a battleaxe even though that would take much longer. I felt this to be a test of my resolve to join the Godsmen.

Keldor

I showed my piece to Keldor. He examined it intensely and said that was one of the better pieces he had seen a recruit forge. He asked if I was ready for the next test. I said I was. **(8000)**

He said that a murderer had struck in the Foundry and he was forsaking the usual test so I could track the killer down. He told me to see Alissa and work back from there.

Alissa Tield

I went to see her as Keldor had instructed me. I saw a number of people gathered around a body. She didn't like being interrupted, but I told her I was investigating the murder under Keldor's authority and asked what she could tell me about it.

She said she was working late when she heard the sound of a scuffle. When she came out she saw a figure slip out the door into the meeting hall and she raised the alarm. I asked if she had any other details. She said that she only knew three people who had access to the buildings that night. They were Thildon, Saros and Bedai-Lihn. Even though they had radically different builds in the haze of the Foundry she could not see to distinguish who it was.

I asked how should I know she didn't do it. She said that she had already had Keldor attain the truth from her. The other three must have had something to hide because none of them would submit to Keldor's spell.

Thildon

Thildon was standing nearby so I questioned him first. He said it was a shame about Avildon, but didn't seem to think much of the man nor be upset at his death.

I asked what he was doing the night of the murder. He said he was in his room eating. Didn't go out that night. I asked if he knew anyone who could swear otherwise? He said no, he never saw the need to make sure of it. He suggested I talk to Saros saying he might just kill someone to see if he could get away with it.

Saros

I decided to see Saros next. My thoughts were that it was most likely to be Thildon or Bedai. It was hard to imagine Saros committing such a deed, Sensate or no.

Saros was much affected by the death. I asked if he had any idea what might have happened? He said that he saw Thildon creeping about. He knew it was Thildon because he dropped something. Saros handed me an awl with Thildon's name etched into the handle.

Bedai-Lihn

I asked her what she knew of the murder. She said she asked the guards to leave for the night because she was working on some delicate engineering in the next room and she didn't need their psychic emanations fouling up some crucial work.

She was dismayed to find the body when she emerged from the room. Since she had no other alibi she realized she was a suspect, but the reason she would not go under Keldor's spell is that it would violate the oath of secrecy she swore to protect the project.

I said I would check on that with Keldor. She said he would verify that.

I decided to visit Thildon again and see if his story would change when I showed him the awl.

Thildon

I told Thildon that Saros had given me an awl found near the body with his name on it and asked him to explain. He looked flustered and then said that Saros was a thief and must have stolen the awl from him. Thildon had been missing the awl for some time, but never mentioned it to anyone 'cause he figured he'd just lost it. He suggested I get Saros before he escaped. I said I would go see the lad.

Saros

He asked what I'd found. I told him what Thildon had said, that Saros planted the awl. He said that of course Thildon would say that. He said that he saw Thildon do it and to tell Thildon he needed proof to accuse Saros.

Thildon

He said he was sure whatever Saros said was full of lies. I told him that Saros said that it wasn't a frame that Saros personally witnessed him killing the man. He exploded. He said that the boy was a thief and a murderer and asked if I would believe what he said if he told me the lad was an Anarchist.

I asked why I should believe that? He said because he said it was so and because he was about to say something that would make a criminal out of himself. He said that he knew Saros was an Anarchist because he tried to recruit Thildon. Saros and the engineer Bedai-Lihn. Thildon said that he told them he'd do it to trap them, but then he realized he didn't have the stomach to harm Saros and turned them down. He said they were now trying to cover their tracks.

Saros

I told him what Thildon had said, that they were Anarchists. He said that Bedai-Lihn had nothing to do with this. He did it on his own, but the truth was that Thildon shoved Avildon into the gears; he said that he put the awl there to make sure that everyone would know Thildon was there.

I asked why I shouldn't think that Saros was doing this to get back at Thildon for some other crime? He said he didn't know, but he said I should go talk to Thildon and tell him what he'd said and then I could decide for myself.

Bedai-Lihn

I went to her to talk about Anarchy. I was starting to grow fond of this headache. I asked whom she was to try and read her expression. Then I asked her to answer some questions and then told her that Thildon had said she was an Anarchist and had tried to pin the crime on him.

She was angry and then scornful. She said I should pull her other leg. If I didn't have any real questions she could get back to work.

I asked why the flash of anger. She said I didn't miss much. She asked how I would feel if I was falsely accused? She said her anger was about that and nothing more. I thought she was being honest.

Thildon

I told him that Saros said he'd only planted the awl to make sure Thildon would be implicated. Thildon sputtered, then asked if Saros had admitted to being an Anarchist. I said yes and that Saros seemed to think that Thildon was dangerous to everyone around him, whoever they were.

He grew apoplectic, saying that HE wasn't the murderer; he was just trying to expose Anarchists. He said I couldn't trust anyone who said they saw him do it, so I couldn't say he did it. My head was starting to ache again.

I asked if he would say the same under oath and spell because I was betting that Saros would. That broke him, though he wasn't done. He asked if he could at least take his gear and give this place the laugh? He said he'd make sure I wouldn't regret it.

I said no and if he didn't remain here he'd face even worse consequences. I never have liked bullies.

Keldor

He asked if I'd finished my investigation. I said that I had. I told him that Thildon did it and that he tried to frame Saros for the crime. I decided to leave Saros' part in this little play out of it. He was only a boy and seemed genuinely regretful at what he'd done. How bad can it be to frame a murderer, anyway?

Keldor was deeply saddened, but said he trusted that my investigation was thorough and that he trusted me. Then he summoned the guards. (10000)

He looked older when he returned. He thanked me for my work and told me that my last task was to prevent Sandoz, the father of Saros and Sarossa from killing himself. I said I would.

Saros

He thanked me for my mercy and said from now on he was on the straight and narrow.

I asked him about the Anarchists. He said he'd rather not talk about that. He thought they would make his life exciting, but instead they turned on him. He thought that they had to look out for themselves, but he just wanted to be part of them.

I said that defeated the entire point of anarchy. That you're supposed to be your own person. (200) He said then, to be a part of them he had to not want to be a part of them? Oh, my head was definitely aching now. I said basically, yes. By being himself he became more than a pawn. Having shared my headache, I left.

Nihl Xander

At the end of a long hallway off the Foundry Hall I saw a bushy-haired man whose fashion sense seemed to have died a slow and lingering death. I asked who he was. He said he was Nihl Xander, great-grandson of Xero Xander, artificer, engineer, and creator. And he had finished his work, the work that I commissioned: the dreambuilder. He asked if I was ready to claim the use of it.

I asked what a dreambuilder was. He said it was both machine and ritual. It granted dreams to those who enter. It was built for me and had been waiting for decades.

I must have a talk with my former selves sometime ... I asked how he knew it was built for me? He said because his great-grandfather had set my face in stone so they would know me when I returned.

I asked if he still had the stone. He said no, that it had been stolen a year ago by a shadowy figure he only saw briefly. I said all right, let's finish it.

He said what he needed to finish the work is a piece of my skin immersed in my blood in a blue-green bottle. The machine must know my physical essence and the color of the bottle would symbolize the dream sea on which I would float.

Oh yes, a very long talk with my selves.

I listed his requirements and left, wondering where I would find the bottle.

I continued up the stairs to see Sandoz.

Sandoz

I had to shout at him past a guard and through a door. He told me to go away. I asked if it was he. He snapped at me, saying these were his rooms, this was his faction. This is where he was going to die.

I asked him to talk about himself. He asked what the point of it was? What keeps driving us. I waited for him to continue. He said pride and ego. We keep telling ourselves that we can be something, that we mean something, but in the end it's just blackness. He'd seen the blackness.

I asked if he ever considered that he became a Godsmen for a reason. He asked what I meant. I asked why he joined. He said he thought there was meaning, but he was wrong. Love, family, wealth, accomplishment, it all means nothing.

I asked if there was anything that could prove him wrong. He said find someone who could persuade him otherwise and then walked away from the door.

I decided to try again and take a different tack. I said they had told me to come talk to him, so I guessed they didn't want him dead. He said so they send a

concerned stranger to talk him out of it. He rattled on and I just waited for him to continue.

He said if I had seen half the things he'd seen ... I asked what he'd seen. He said he had seen horrors beyond imagining. He'd seen a twisted, tortured god, bound by laughing fiends, all the laws of nature perverted and all the truths of man turned upside-down. None of it made sense to him anymore.

I said that that was the entire basis of the Godsmen philosophy. I told him he should remember that he was going through tests. What was being tested now was in his grasp. He should look at what he'd done and ask himself what he was supposed to learn.

He said they'd taught me well and asked if he could think about it. I told him he had all the time in the world.

When he spoke again his voice sounded more balanced. He told me to go and tell Keldor that I'd talked some sense in to him.

Keldor

He asked if I'd succeeded. I said that I had. **(12000)** He congratulated me, saying that I had proved myself worthy. He asked if I wanted to take the oath now or wait until later. I said I would take it now. **(8000)**

"Life's tribulations are tests. There is nothing I encounter that is not a lesson. Pain is the multiverse's way of reinforcing a lesson. What I hate most in others is a reflection of what I hate most in myself. I will act to activate my potential and to aid others in achieving their goals. I will remember that divinity's spark is present in everything. I swear fealty to the Believers of the Source and their goals, never to forsake them."

I swore that oath and Keldor welcomed me to the Godsmen.

I then asked if I could buy items and he showed me their store. I choose the spell Chain Lightning and the Ascension Axe and Enlightenment, the finest dagger I had ever seen.

I asked him if I could see the secret project. He put a token with the Godsmen symbol emblazoned on it into my hand.

Sarossa

She thanked me for my words to her father and asked what else she could do for me. I talked to her again about talents and she told me of hers. I asked if she could change me and she said she would if the price was right. I asked what the price was.

She asked if I subscribed to the philosophy of the Godsmen. I said truthfully that I did. (**Wisdom +1**) She spoke some arcane symbol and I felt something move within my mind.

I asked how she did that. She said that she knew not, but that it had always been a part of her. I thanked her and took my leave.

Nadilin

As we went by his office I sent Annah in to see what was in his pockets. He had a few coppers and when she tried again she got a receipt. I thought I would see what I could get with it.

I told Nadilin I was there to pick up an item. He asked for the receipt so I gave him the one Annah “borrowed.” He looked at it and then went in the back and brought out a weapon and handed it to me. It was a large mace called Justifier.

Justifier

I moved off a little distance to examine my new play-pretty. As I did so it, well, he spoke to me. He greeted me and said I must be his new master. I nearly dropped the mace in surprise.

Recovering, I talked with Justifier about my companions then asked about him.

He said he was called the Justifier because he could find an excuse for almost anything. He said he was forged by one of the smiths under the auspices of Horus himself. Then he said I seemed familiar to him.

I said familiar how? He said he couldn't recall right now, but give him a little more time and he was sure he'd remember.

Lower Ward

Giltspur

I remembered that we needed to return to tell Giltspur we had relayed his message.

I told him the message had been delivered. **(6000)** He thanked me and said he had one more task and would pay 200 common. I was to take a handbill down to Barkis at the Smoldering Corpse and ask him to post it.

Kii'na

I saw her and thought to tell her about the coming attack on the fortress of Vristigor. She asked how I had come to know that name. I told her that a group of githyanki was planning a raid on the fortress within the sevenday.

She said know that I had her gratitude, the zerth and me. Know that this would not be forgotten. Then she turned to Dak'kon and said he should know that this did not atone for Shrak'at'lor. **(8000)**

As we finished our conversation we were set upon by something out of a nightmare ... A nightmare I'd had in the Alley of Dangerous Sighs. It was one of the Shadows that had attacked me before. After a short, but furious fight the thing, whatever it was, gave a hideous shriek and died.

We made our way to the Smoldering Corpse to complete our task for Giltspur.

SE Hive

The Smoldering Corpse

Barkis

I told Barkis that Giltspur wanted him to post the handbill. He looked it over and then said all right.

[The following section was interesting, but ultimately I failed in my intention to find the Blind Archer. I believe he is a zombie that I accidentally angered without knowing it much earlier in the game. If you accidentally make someone angry with you you can turn them friendly again by dying in their presence. In the case

of the Blind Archer I had to turn off party AI then had Nordon attack me while the zombie tried. I had already found that the zombie would only be able to damage me on a critical hit so that I would never be killed by him.]

NE Hive

Mortuary

Zhuang Bei

I resolved to look again for the Blind Archer that Fell had spoken of. On the first floor of the Mortuary I saw corpse 1041. He was obviously foreign to the Hive so I used my ability to speak to the dead on him.

He brushed off his clothes and then, noticing me, bowed in my direction. I bowed in return. He smiled, then composed himself and began speaking in a soft lilting tone in what was obviously a foreign language.

I told him I had no idea what he was saying and asked if he could understand me. He paused in thought and then spoke in a thickly accented yet educated voice. He said it had been no small length of time since he had spoken my language. Then he asked what I would know of him.

I asked who he was. He said he was known as Zhuang Bei, tutor and bodyguard to Liu Xixi, daughter of Censor Chi'an.

I commented on him being both tutor and bodyguard. He said it was not so uncommon where he hailed from. It was his duty to stay by Miss Liu at all times, not only to keep her from harm, but also to educate her. He had been regarded as a scholar of some repute as well as a swordsman. Perhaps he would have served her better had he been a better swordsman.

I asked if he failed her somehow. He said he would tell me the entire tale. One fair evening they were standing on a balcony over the Courtyard, where he was teaching her about the various constellations. I bade him to go on.

He said as they stood there two assassins suddenly burst down from the rooftop to the balcony. Shouting for the guards he drew his blade and leapt to her defense. In the ensuing battle, the balcony's railing was shattered and the four of them fell into the jade portal.

I asked about the Jade Portal.

He said that the Jade Portal is a circular pool that lies in the Courtyard, paved with tiles of green and white soapstone. It is called the Portal because it is said that at times glimpses of another place appear reflected in its shimmering waters. I asked him to continue.

He said he had never imagined that it was a portal, but he suddenly found himself lying in an unfamiliar alleyway, his leg broken. He recovered himself only in time to see the assassins fleeing with Liu Xixi tossed over one of their shoulders. I waited for him to continue.

He said he limped about painfully until he found someone to heal his leg. From that healer and others he learned the tongue of the people here, all the while searching for the two assassins and his charge.

I said it was odd how quickly he was able to pick up the language. He said that linguistics was an area of great interest to him. When he became a scholar he found he could learn new tongues with little trouble at all.

I said that would explain things. I asked if he ever found the assassins. He said that he hunted down one of them, but he would not speak. Zhuang said that he executed him and kept his head in a silk bag so that he could return it to the Censor when he returned Miss Liu. The other assassin eluded him. More than that, in fact, he slew Zhuang before Zhuang could kill him and rescue his charge.

I asked if he would have known how to return to his land had he been successful. He said no, but he was confident he would have found a way. I wondered aloud if they were still in the city and offered to find and help the girl.

He said my offer marked me as a noble man, however no less than 75 years had passed since he was slain. The assassin and Miss Liu are most likely long dead.

I asked him where he was from. He said it was a place called Shou Lung.

I asked how he came to be here. Again he spoke of his death, but I said I meant how did he come to be a corpse working in the Mortuary. He said a woman approached him one night from the organization called the Dustmen. She said that in return for a small sum of money his corpse would be used here after his demise.

I asked if that seemed a bit odd to him. He said at first, but after speaking with her for some time he realized that they felt much the same way he did regarding death.

I asked where his spirit resided now. He looked pained for a moment, then said it resided in the realm of the Illustrious Magistrate, Yen-Wang-Yeh: The Palace of Judgement.

I asked if it was a bad place. He said that after he arrived he was to be ushered to his final, true destination. However, there was some sort of commotion during

his escort through the Palace and he was left alone in a side room with the promise that he would be attended to in a moment.

I asked if he knew his final destination. He couldn't say and said it was all very frustrating. He paused to regain his composure. I asked him to continue his tale.

He said no one ever returned for him. He waited quietly for what seemed like days, but it was to no avail. He left the room to wander the Palace hoping to find someone to direct him. He sighed and said that there are 9,001 rooms here; in each one he had passed through he was merely directed to another. He thought he had fallen between the cracks.

I asked if I could help. He said my offer was kind, but he was afraid that there was nothing I could do. He was sure that, in time, he would be sped on his way, though he thanked me again.

I asked what that was he spoke to me when he first appeared. He said it was a poem, difficult to translate and asked if I had another question, smiling at me uneasily. I said no, but I did want to know more about the poem.

He said very well and thought for a moment. Then he spoke in a steady, measured rhythm:

"It is difficult to meet as it is difficult to part.

"The north wind has weakened; hundreds of flowers fade away.

"When the Spring worms die, the silk shall never come again.

"When the candle wax becomes ash, tears shall stop."

I asked if he was saying that I should have left his spirit alone, did I offend him by calling him here? He said no, he had hoped not to be so direct, to avoid a confrontation. It is only that he no longer desired to have any part in this world.

Blind Archer

Xachariah

In the northeast area of the first floor of the Mortuary, just south of where a Dustman patrolled the northeast corner I found corpse 331. When I used the Stories-Bones-Tell on him I found out his true identity.

He was quite disoriented when he came back to his body. I asked if he could see me. He said he was blind as death as he was in life. Now who was I?

I said Xachariah? He was shocked, but gladdened. Wasn't I dead?

I asked who he was. He said he was Xachariah, the Fool. He asked if I was dead too. I said it was a long tale, but I was not dead. At last, someone glad to see me.

I asked what he was doing here. He said he was a stable hand in the most lifeless place of all. I asked what it was like being a zombie. He said it was honest work. Then grinned and said he cared little for it.

We talked about a number of things before I asked about my former companions. One thing to note, when I asked about the mortuary he told me about the fake zombie, but when I prompted him further he told me that Dhall had saved me from cremation several times.

We also talked about what he remembered of my previous life. When he asked why I said that I had forgotten myself. He said I was a strange one, always

suspicious. I said anything else? He said I would be ruthless, too, like when I made him sign that contract or abandoned that chit on Avernus.

I asked if there was anything else that would help. He said that at my core I looked at what happened to me like taking territory in a war; everything was like a battle to me and I was the most ruthless bastard he ever met. Poor Deionarra didn't sway me none, the gith warning me about my strategies and poor Xachariah just trying to hold on when we hit the Planes.

I asked if there was anything else. He said that I left something when I left them. I left Dak'kon without a master and the skull without a friend. I stabbed something so deep inside him it never came out when he was alive. Caused his blood to run cold, it did, that think sitting like a lump of lead in his chest.

I asked what it was. He said he didn't know, but it changed him somehow. Changed his insides. He was already dying when I put it in him, so he wasn't too concerned about it at the time.

I asked if I could have it back. He said it was buried pretty deep, but he had an idea of where it was. Without a scalpel and some directions from him I wouldn't be able to get it out. Did I have a scalpel?

I said no, but I ought to be able to just tear the stitches. He said to open him up half a hand's width below the sternum and feel around for it. I did it. He directed me a little more to the left and my hand closed on an object.

I pulled it out. Well, now I wish I had some onions. It was a zombified liver. He apologized and said he thought the Dustmen took all of them out. He suggested I give it another go.

I did it again. He directed me once more. This time I felt something hard and cold, slightly larger than I expected. He said he thought that was it.

I pulled it out. I was holding a blackened, fist-sized object that was extremely heavy for its size. He said that was it all right. He said was that it? It looked like a heart.

I said I thought so and thanked him. **(Xachariah's Heart)**

I then asked him about all my companions. Before I left he asked me to do something about the contract he'd signed with the Dustmen. He asked if I could put him back in the dead book where he belonged, for old time's sake.

I said if that was his wish ... He fell to the floor with a faint hiss. Then, with a rattle, the corpse was silent. I bid farewell to yet another mortal who had learned more than I. And one of my only friends.

Lower Ward

Giltspur

I told Giltspur I had taken the handbill to Barkis. **(8000)**

Clerk's Ward

Feeling that, for now, our business was done in the Lower Ward we moved on to the Clerk's Ward.

Diligence

There we saw an older woman by the entrance arch. She looked none-to-pleased to see us. She asked what we wanted and warned us to watch our words as she was Diligence, Fourth Magistrate of the Ward.

I said who? But she just stared at me, obviously unhappy at our presence. I asked if something troubled her about my appearance. She said she should most certainly think so! Should the Apparel Regulation Act be passed, people of my sort won't be permitted to traipse about in such a manner, half-naked and filthy as I was.

Yes, but better rags to wear than her mind to live in. I said she was quick to judge people by their appearance. She asked if I would tell her, then, that I was not a wanderer, meandering about the city asking questions of all those I come across, engaging in more than the occasional combat to the death with those who cross me?

She said that like it's a bad thing ... I said all that aside, I was quite clean and some cultures might find her clothes offensive. She examined me skeptically for a moment, and then nodded, saying my point was well taken. Still, I could not deny I was a rough-looking fellow.

I said that my appearance was merely a product of my environment and a difficult life. I shouldn't be held accountable for that. She said that I should. How easy was it for one to blame one's surroundings for their every failing. She asked why not, since I was obviously educated, settle in Sigil and become a contributing citizen?

I said the choice was out of my hands. She asked how so? I told her my story. She looked shocked, saying that was quite a tale.

I said I wished it were only a tale. It was my life and I've the scars to prove it, as she'd noted when we first met. She said quite so. Then she smiled. I was surprised her face didn't crack. She said she wished me luck in my undertakings.

Clerk's Ward Citizen

I stopped a woman as she passed and she seemed uncomfortable being accosted by me. But then she saw Morte and exclaimed at what a cute little mimir he was. I said wasn't he, though? And told her he liked the top of his skull scratched.

She asked if that was true and thought I was joking. I said what did she mean, didn't they all enjoy that? She shook her head and said no, none that she'd seen. They were merely objects, and aren't—

Morte interrupted her and told me it was all about differences in the quality of your mimir. Some, like him, are more enchanted than others, that's all. More self-aware. I said 'hmm' and tried to look thoughtful. The woman said that could be.

Malmaner

A thin, sharp-faced man ran towards us as we walked up the northern avenue in the Ward. He asked if we were here to visit a tailor. I started to speak, but was interrupted. He said that he asked because he seemed to have offended the tailor. This fellow had commissioned the tailor to make him a costume, but he'd thrown Malmaner out of the shop and wouldn't speak to him.

I was interrupted again. He shook his fists at the sky and said what had he done to deserve such treatment? Nothing, he said. He was a patron and it was the tailor's duty to serve him.

Finally I was able to get a word in as he stopped to recover his breath. I asked what he wanted from me. He seemed to have forgotten I was there for a

moment, but asked if I would enter the place and fetch his costume. I said yes, I would do it now.

Tailor Shop

Goncalves

The tailor was hard at work embroidering some pattern into a piece of fabric. I said hello. He ignored me and muttered under his breath. I asked if he heard me. He did not look up, but said he was “certain” that what I needed was quite urgent. Now, if I would just be silent for a moment ... I waited quietly.

At last he was done and looked up at me. Before I could speak he picked up another item and set to work on it. Again, tiny colored sparks dripped from the fabric as he worked. I waited again.

He finally finished his work and set it down to examine me. He greeted me and said he was Goncalves, and then asked what I wanted to see him about.

I asked what those sparks were while he was embroidering. He said they were nothing but a bit of the Art, which he at times wove into the fabric when fancy struck him. The items he lavished such enchantments on were his most special creations, which he rarely sold.

I asked what sort of magical clothes he had available. He said he had nothing that would fit me. I told him I would like to see what he had to offer all the same. It turned out he had two jerkins that looked breathlessly good on Annah.

I asked to buy a Dustman costume, which he sold me for 30 coppers.

Malmaner

He started on me as soon as I walked out of the shop, asking if I'd gotten the costume. I told him what it cost and he threw the money at me. **(8000)** I enjoyed telling him that many people would attend as Dustmen.

This made him nearly apoplectic. He said he would hate to arrive in such a common costume. I said I could see if he had another ready. He said that wasn't a bad idea. I told him I would return with another costume.

Tailor Shop

Goncalves

I asked him if he had a different costume. He said it happened that he had a Godsmen costume, if I would like, for 50 coppers. I said I'd take it.

Malmaner

He asked if I'd gotten the costume. I said yes and told him what it cost. **(6000)** He shoved the money into my hands.

Sarhava Vjhul

As I continued down the avenue I saw a woman and two escorts. The woman was obviously rich and well in her cups. She was also no stranger to battle, for many scars crisscrossed her thighs and forearms.

I bid her greetings. She said what did we have here, a little tiefling gutter-queen come crawling out of the Hive? Annah flushed and drew her blades, snarling.

Sarhava said now don't do that and seemed unconcerned at the weapons. She said that if Annah weren't careful she'd remove Annah's tail and feed it to her dogs.

I said enough and told her to apologize to Annah or I'd be carving bits off of her. She asked what foul thing gave birth to me? Then laughed and asked if I was one of death's bastards. Her hand rested on a long knife at her hip.

Morte asked if I wanted him to slap her down. Laughing, I told him to show no mercy. Morte winked at me and called to the woman: "Hey you! That's right, you there, you saucy little tart. Look at me when I talk to you! What's got you so bitter, hmm?"

The woman, nonplussed, did not reply. Morte continued: "Aw, did the little Desert Princess have her britches in a bunch because the sultan wanted another son? Tell me, do you spend most of your nights drunken and belligerent, followed about by a handful of leering sycophants, looking in your own pathetic way to justify your existence to a disapproving father?"

I was impressed. Morte certainly knew his stuff. She sputtered, saying how dare—

But Morte gave her no pause to finish: "Do you really think your petty brawling will finally make you feel better about yourself? Feel like you're worth something? Because it won't! If this is your sad little path to feeling better about who you are then I suggest you just give up, go home and marry off into some courtier's harem!"

Man, that'd had to hurt. All she could stutter was I ... I ...

Morte turned to me and said see, I know what's going to happen here. We all know Morte's right on the ball with this one, but oh, no, proud little Desert Princess, cut down in public humiliat—

At this point, the woman drew her blade and, snarling like an enraged animal, lunged at Morte. Expecting this, I drew my weapon and set to. I'll say this for the Princess, she was well heeled.

A few moments after the fight, while I was collecting my loot from her body I was attacked by another of those Shadows. I slew it with one blow.

Civic Festhall

Splinter

Near the entrance was a golden man. Whether his skin was painted or natural I could not tell. He bowed as he saw me and said that his name was Splinter and he was the doorman to the Festhall and Priest-King of Ur. Though his tone was humble, his voice was powerful and commanding.

I asked how he could help me. He said that they do many things in this hall. He answered questions guests might have about the hall or its inhabitants. He also accepted new members into the Society. Also he provided access to the Society's vaults.

I asked if he could show me the sensoriums. He said there were two; the public sensoriums, which cost between 10 and 50 common, and the private sensorium where only members of the Society of Sensation were allowed. I would have to be escorted to either one. I asked how to get to the private sensorium. He said I must become a member.

I told him that I was a member, that I had just not been there for a long, long while and that I had gathered many experiences in my absence.

He looked me over and said hrm a lot, then said that he would allow me access to the member's areas if I could show them what sensations I'd gathered recently.

I said I was ready. He said they would ask for 5 sensations, then, each pertaining to one of the body's senses or a single experience that had strong elements of all 5 senses.

I said I would have a single experience, then: I woke up, not knowing where I was, on a cold, blood-soaked iron slab in the bowels of the Mortuary, a place only the Dustmen or the corpses in their care have seen. He told me to go on.

I described the experience of moving through the Mortuary in detail. He nodded and said it was a disturbing experience. I told him I'd even left out the part about a chattering skull that flew at me as soon as I was upright. I asked if that would suffice.

He said yes, that they welcomed me back and granted me access to those privileges allowed only to members of the Society.

I asked about Ravel and was told to speak to a wizard by the name of Quell. Quell was always somewhere in the Festhall, most often in a private sensorium.

Jolmi

Near Splinter was a stern-looking older woman who asked me for a word when she saw me. I said of course. She said her name was Jolmi and that she was a noblewoman of the House Syrma. She was seeking a certain man that she had

been told could not die. A terribly scarred man for whom death is nothing but the most trivial of annoyances. What bits of description she had gathered matched me quite well. She asked if I was this man.

I said that I was. She said she was pleased to meet me. She wanted to make me an unusual proposal. She said she would give me 1000 commons for my permission to kill me. Was I open to discussion on the matter?

I asked why. She asked why not? She thought it might be an interesting experience to pay someone for the privilege of murdering them. When she first heard rumors of my existence, how could she resist?

I asked where she had heard these rumors. She said one hears all manner of things in the Festhall. How could she NOT eventually hear of a man like me? Again she asked if I would consider her proposal.

I said yes, that we should work out the details. After a brief discussion we reached the following terms: Jolmi would pay me 2000 common and in return I would allow her to drive her dagger into my heart. She would wait for me to awaken at which time she would give me the coin. For 2000 common I could live with the hangover. I said I'd do it.

It was over quickly. After I picked myself up off of the Festhall floor she handed over the money. She said it was somewhat disappointing, but it was coin well spent nonetheless. I took my leave.

Mertwyn the Headless

As we walked along the main hall I saw a man continually bumping into things. Of course, I thought he was drunk, but as I drew closer I saw that I had been

mistaken. The man had no head. Where his head should have been was a wooden prosthesis. Even for me, this was an odd sight.

Not knowing what to expect, I greeted him. His hands reached out as if he was trying to tell exactly where I was. I let him touch me. He found my forearm, then clutched it and followed it up to my shoulder, eventually reaching my head. At last it grabbed my hand and shook it in greeting. I noted that his skin was cold and clammy.

I asked if he could understand me. He made a series of hand movements, and then appeared to be waiting for a response. I said that I didn't understand. He tapped his foot for a moment, and then pointed to me then at the eyes of his wooden head, then me again.

I said that no, I hadn't seen his head anywhere. He shrugged, slumped a bit and turned to amble off.

Montague

Reaching the end of the main hall we entered a door to our right and saw a handsome young man lost in through. I greeted him. He greeted me in return.

I asked who he was. He said he was Montague, a factotum of the Sensates. I asked what a Factotum was and he said he was a member of the Sensates.

I asked what he was doing. He said he was working as an assistant for one of the faction's administrators. Though more often now than previously he found himself perplexed by one of life's strange ways.

I said such as? He replied it was a problem of the feminine variety. I asked what the problem was. He said he didn't know what was bothering her. He had tried to cheer her up.

I asked how things had been between them. He said other than this bout of discontent and humdrums everything had been splendid.

I said that perhaps the problem was that there were no problems. He asked what I meant. I suggested that the lady might wish a little more spice in their relationship.

He asked how I would know what she wished. He became wroth. He said they love and love unconditionally. Then he called me out. I told him to hold and calm himself.

He apologized and said it was the fury of the moment. I told him to think nothing of it. He said I was indeed gracious.

He did not seem to know much else and kept directing me to see others for information.

Qui-Sai

I saw a life-sized statue of a gentleman standing with his arms at his sides, eyes closed. It was an exquisite work; so lifelike I was unsure that it was a statue.

I touched the statue. I found that the clothes were gray cloth, not stone, but the skin was cool and as hard as granite. I wondered aloud why someone would clothe a statue. Morte, his mind always in the gutter, suggested that the statue might be too anatomically correct. I told Morte it was a rhetorical question. He said he knew that.

I made to strike the statue. As I did so its eyes flashed open and it caught my fist in a grip of iron. Then, in a voice of mill wheels turning it asked me why I would strike Qui-Sai.

I asked forgiveness, that I was only trying to see if he was truly a statue. He said I was forgiven. However, he felt I was lacking patience.

I said perhaps and asked if he would answer questions. He returned to his silent state. I asked again about my questions. There was no response, so I waited ... and waited ... and waited.

Finally his eyes opened again and he gazed at me, saying my patience was noted. He said that Qui-Sai would ... speak ... with me now. Morte rolled his eyes and made a gagging noise, saying powers no, not another berk that talks ... like ... this ...

I said I had questions about him. After a moment of silence he said ask.

I asked what he was meditating on when I first saw him. He said he meditated upon ... the Way of Stone. I asked what that was. He said it was a philosophy, a method of combat. With it he sought to achieve ... invulnerability.

I remarked that he would be unbeatable in combat. He said yes, but the way is not yet ... perfect. He would ... make it so, one day.

I asked what he'd discovered so far. He said no one had ever asked him to share his knowledge of ... the Way. Then he began speaking slowly and carefully ... I listened to learn the Way of Stone. (**Armor class -1 permanently**)

After hours of listening and many questions I came to understand the little he could teach me. I thanked him.

Jumble Murdersense

This rotund fellow meandered about everywhere. I greeted him. He gave an exaggerated bow and presented a small card, which gave his name and labeled him Xaositect Xorceror X-traordinaire. No sooner had he given me the card then he snatched it up again and ate it. Xactly what I wanted.

Morte whispered that somewhere an asylum was one barmy short.

I asked if he was the man who cursed Reekwind. He pulled an innocent face and shrugged, then giggled like a schoolgirl. I asked him to remove the curse. He pretended not to hear me.

I asked if there was anything I could do so that he would remove the curse. He shook his head. I told him to remove the curse before I hurt him.

He took a step back and opened his mouth. Though his lips and throat did not move nor make any sound a torrent of incomprehensible babbling poured forth. At last, he ceased, then looked at me and smiled.

I hiccupped. And hiccupped. And again, and again. He turned his head and waved me away.

Morte said I had a curse on me now. I asked what he had done. He refused to help at all. I remembered seeing a mage near the entrance to the Festhall, so I made my way to him to see if he could help.

Clerk's Ward

Salabesh the Onyx

The mage was still there, dressed in crimson robes. He introduced himself as the future mage-tutor of the Civic Festhall I approached and asked what business I had with him.

I asked what he meant by the future mage-tutor of the Festhall. He said it was his intention to one day take the position of mages' tutor, but the title's currently in the possession of the Lady Thorncombe. If he could only prove that he'd be a superior tutor ...

I asked why he was called Onyx. He said that in his youth he was once called Salabesh the Golden, for he was said to have a heart of gold ... small, hard and yellow. He cursed the fool who started that so that he could only speak from his arse and defecate through his mouth. The Onyx appellation, along the same lines as the Golden, though less clever, soon followed. In any event, he said he was a kinder man now and wasn't sure he deserved the name any longer.

I incredulously asked again about the curse he had placed. He said that yes, I had heard correctly. That sort of thing was why he was known as the Master of Curses.

I said then perhaps he could help me. He said it was doubtful, but then relented and asked what troubled me.

I told him that Jumble had cursed me. He said that sputtering mooncalf could never best him. He said that, unlike a cursed item, this would have to be removed by Jumble willingly; he could do nothing.

I asked if he could teach me a curse I could use on Jumble. He said he didn't normally do that. It would take some time and ...

I said that perhaps he thought his curses just weren't good enough to best Jumble anymore. He sputtered and said that was ridiculous, calling me several names. He said that he could give me a single phrase that would render that nincompoop's cursing wholly impotent!

I pursed my lips and looked skeptical. He said that's it, I'd made him do it. He uttered a short string of impossible syllables, words of power, which I noted mentally. Then he said see what THAT does to him.

I thanked him and said I would.

Civic Festhall

I walked up to Jumble and threw the curse at him. He stared at me as I spoke, then, after a moment of silence, he noted that nothing had seemed to happen. An evil grin spread across his face.

He opened his mouth to retaliate with his own curse and realized that he had no voice. Without a voice he was powerless. He clutched at his throat, panic welling up in his eyes.

I observed that the tables had turned and asked him what would happen when anyone he'd cursed found out he couldn't curse anymore.

He dropped to his knees and looked ready to burst into tears. I asked if he would remove the curse on me and swear never to curse another who meant him no harm. (10000)

I said very well, I would remove the curse. He sighed with relief as I removed the curse from him. He, in turn, removed his own and my hiccups ceased.

I told him I wanted the curse removed from Reekwind as well. (1000)

He nodded, though pouting and waved his hand to remove it. I said farewell.

Three-Planes-Aligned

He introduced himself and told us the nature of the lecture he was about to give. Morte wanted to skip, but I told him to hush and stayed to hear the whole lecture.

Death's Advocate

He bid the small crowd welcome and listen to the darks of which he spoke.

Again Morte interjected, asking if we were really going to listen to this rattletrap. His notion was that we find some Sensate chits that have never had the sensation of tasting the fiery passion of a skull's lips.

Morte, Morte, Morte ... You can dress him up ... I told him to be quiet, that we were staying.

Death's Advocate began, saying that death was not an end, but a beginning.

Morte whispered that it was the beginning of more suffering. I nodded to him.

Death's Advocate continued saying that when you die you shall not cease to exist. The Outer Planes shall welcome you. There a new life such as we'd never known awaits us.

Morte said that's for sure. I nodded again.

Death's Advocate said that we become a petitioner when we die and that as a petitioner on the Outer Plane our life's journey truly began. I continued to listen.

He said that if we had been goodly sorts perhaps the light-blanketed slopes of Mount Celestia would house us, where we would dwell in the beauty of golden mornings, soft sunlight ...

Morte added, and eternal boredom. I nodded.

Death's Advocate talked about the Planes of Evil and how as a petitioner we would live a life of treachery, lying, knowing a life without trust. Morte said we know where we're going to end up. I nodded to Morte.

He went on about other evil Planes and I continued to listen. He talked of the lowest Planes of chaotic evil, doomed to mindless cruelty and suffering or servitude in the Blood War.

Morte said and that was if you're lucky. I nodded to Morte.

Death's Advocate said that no matter where we go we will be embarking on a new life.

Morte said and that's supposed to be an incentive? We get to do all this again? Gee I can't wait to be a floating skull all over again. Pike him. Spoken just like someone who hasn't died before, huh? I nodded again to Morte

Death's Advocate continued, saying that we would be able to start anew without the burden of memory or your past life. Our goal is to merge with the new Plane that you're on. I kept listening. He went on about our life after death and how to accomplish the goal of merging you **MUST HOLD ONTO YOUR IDEALS!**

Morte said this was one, big steaming load. I nodded again.

Death's Advocate went on saying our journey would end when we became part of the plane itself. I kept listening, but the man IS a bore. He said that was what awaited us after death, not oblivion.

Morte had had enough and shouted that that was a load of wash. Death's Advocate turned to face Morte and he asked if Morte had a question. Morte ducked down and said I should tell him the dark of it.

I said I had a question. I asked what if someone couldn't die? He said everyone dies, even gods. I said that I can't die. This was met with much derision. I said I could prove it. He said oh do; do.

I wasn't going to enjoy the hangover, but this berk was asking for it. I killed myself. He turned white as alabaster and said by the Powers!

I said that I thought it only fair that he prove his point now. He could only splutter in protest. I said he should go on and die here and now to prove his words.

He gulped and said that he must confess that he wasn't quite ready to depart this life just yet. I made a motion to kill him, stopping just short of his neck. He

flinched, shut his eyes and screeched. I said so this great new life on the Outer Planes may not be all it's supposed to be?

He was aware of his hypocrisy, but was afraid of the alternative. He said perhaps not ... Certainly not now.

Festhall Room Clerk

Eventually I came to a desk where a clerk sat. She smiled at me and flipped through a large ledger and handed me a small key. She said the easternmost chamber had been waiting quite some time for my return and asked if I wanted to rest now. I said no, but asked what she meant by waiting for my return?

She gave me a strange look and said that her ledger indicated that this was my key and had been for a good, long time. I thanked her and took the key.

Going into the room I found many items that I presume a former incarnation left me along the walls of shelves and cupboards.

There was one locked cupboard. I set Annah to work and she quickly opened it. Inside was a scroll of Fire and Ice and a Dodecahedron.

I stared at the Dodecahedron. It seemed to be a sort of puzzle box. Each side would have to be positioned just so, meaning that the chance of stumbling onto the right combination was vanishingly small, but I fiddled with it for a bit while the others stowed their gear.

As I did so my hands seemed to move on their own, turning the object and spinning its facets with mechanical precision. I felt I had done this before ... that I'd known the combinations, once and I sensed there was a certain danger within the object. The nature of the danger I could not recall.

I kept working the device. In moments I had what might be the first four sides locked into their proper places. As I began to twist the fifth side I recalled a cunning blade-trap that would snap out to lash at a meddler's hands. I avoided the trap with the proper number of rotations.

I kept working the dodecahedron. I slowly puzzled out the next series of facet positions. As I started to turn the ninth side of the dodecahedron I remembered a second trap. I circumvented this also, feeling that I was close to solving it.
(5000)

I began the final facet positions. Just as I was locking the twelfth pentagon into place I remembered sorcerous runes hidden within that would blast me with bolts of lightening. After disarming the final trap the dodecahedron clicked and began to open in my hands.

It split once, then again and eventually unfolded itself into a perfectly rectangular tablet the size of a large book. Etched into its surface was a series of bizarre symbols, a code or language that I felt should be familiar, but wasn't. Further examination of the tablet revealed that by twisting the facets that were now upon the underside of the tablet different pages may be displayed across the tablet's face.

I knew it was my journal ...

I put it away until the time when I could read the language.

Unfulfilled-Desire

Exploring the rooms I met a woman of great beauty in her chambers off west of the central lobby. I felt compelled to greet her.

She asked if I wanted something and said that I had only to name my desire and she could provide it. Morte said he just looooooooooved the Festhall.

I asked what she had that I might want. She said all that I might want lay within her reach. What little she did not possess, she could obtain.

I asked for all of my memories. She said she could help me. I asked what proof she had that she could return them to me. She did not move visibly, but suddenly her hand was touching my forehead. I felt as if the fog in my head had been peeled away, briefly, enough to catch a glimpse of remembrance.

I described the way in which I wanted my memories back. As I spoke she leaned forward attentively. Her presence caused me to speak more than I normally would. After a few moments her eyes fluttered and she gave a sharp intake of breath. My desire for my memories began to wane, slowly drained out of me leaving only a sense of cold emptiness. She opened her eyes as I stopped speaking.

She asked if something was wrong, did I no longer want my memories returned? I said no ... I mean, yes ... I asked what she had done to me. She seemed perplexed and asked whatever did I mean? Despite her innocent behavior I was certain something unnatural had happened. It was as if she had siphoned off some part of my desire. Had I finished speaking of my desire I'm certain it would have been lost to me forever.

She was still shilling, asking me to tell her something else I wanted. I said that I'd best not and left. While I had been otherwise engaged Annah found a locked dresser, which she quietly picked. Inside were over a score of coppers.

In a room to the northwest was a locked chest with most of 200 coppers in it. Annah certainly was helpful to have around.

Dak'kon

Thinking about my recent encounter with the githyanki I spoke to Dak'kon and asked him about his people's language, asking if he could teach me the ways in which they speak. **(600)**

Since I had grown in knowledge and had several new spells I talked to Dak'kon and applied myself to the Art again. I memorized those spells I wished to and then borrowed his Circle to examine the plates and see if I could puzzle out any new combinations. **(6000)**

[My intelligence is now 18.]

I read: Know that a mind divided divides the man. The will and the hand must be as one. In knowing the self, one becomes strong. I continued to read: Know that if you know a course of action to be true in your heart, do not betray it because the path leads to hardship. Know that without suffering, the Rising would have never been and the People would never have come to know themselves.

I read on: Know that there is nothing in all the Worlds that can stand against unity. When all know a single purpose, when all hand are guided by one will and all act with the same intent, the Planes themselves may be moved.

I read more: A divided mind is one that does not know itself. When it is divided it cleaves the body in two. When one has a single purpose the body is strengthened. In knowing the self grow strong.

Giving the Circle back to Dak'kon I talked to him about what I had read, that there was an Eighth Circle that spoke about the division of the mind and the importance of focus.

He was silent a moment. When he spoke again his tone was quiet, almost reverent. He asked what the Eighth Circle said. I said that it spoke of focus and discipline, about how not knowing oneself can physically divide the man. It also talked of the weakness division causes. It seemed to me that it tells one to not only know themselves and take strength from that, but that your focus can reveal the weakness of an enemy.

He asked if I would make this circle known to him. I unlocked the Eighth Circle for him. (10000) (10000) As I twisted the links two plates slid free. I gave one to Dak'kon and told him we should both study them. I said that perhaps when he knew the Eighth Circle perhaps he would know Zerthimon's heart when he made the pronouncement of Two Skies. His words were not those of the illithids, but of the People.

Dak'kon stared at the plates, then looked up and matched my gaze. His blade bent and shifted until the shimmering became a silver glow. He seemed stronger somehow. (**Strength +1, Dex and Con +2 permanently for Dak'kon.**)

He said I should know that when death came for me he would meet its blade with his. Know that when all died around me, he would live for my sake. I told Dak'kon that when we died it would be the same death. It shall be the pronouncement of Two Deaths As One.

Thus we learned Zirthimon's Focus.

We left the rooms and passed by a number of chambers where novices of the various schools: thieving, wizardry and fighting were practicing. None of them had time to speak to us.

Ghysis the Crooked

In a room with a long, T-shaped table a lecture of some sort was going on. I took a chair to listen. It seemed to be about the Blood War. Morte was even more bored with this than he had been with the other lectures.

I told Morte I wanted to hear this. The man had a good deal to say, though it was difficult to understand, given his heavy accent. At the end he threw the floor open to questions.

I asked if he could tell us a little more on the Blood War itself. He said that it had been going on almost forever and will keep going on until forever gets penned in the Dead-Book. The chaotic evil forces of the tanar'ri are trying to stomp the baatezu, the champions of law and evil. They war over what evil should be.

I asked what would happen if someone stopped the War? He said you couldn't because it was too big. You'd be a pebble in an ocean that's a pebble in another ocean that's a pebble in another ocean and so on till the stenchkows come home.

He said that if you could make a difference, which you can't, you shouldn't try, cause then the Planes would tumble on down. I asked why. He said the Blood War's like a big, bloody support beam propping up the Planes. Kick it down and a lot of the Planes would come down with it. I asked him to go on.

He said besides, as some say, war's great for business. He laughed hollowly, and then looked as if he could suddenly cry. I asked if he was all right. He said

he's no priest nor would he want to be one, but hear this: keep evil out of your heart. When you die with evil in your heart your spirit falls into the Lower Planes.

Any guesses as to what happens then? Petitioners in the Abyss and Baator get twisted into soldiers and get to fight the Blood War for all eternity. He said that was why the baatezu and tanar'ri try to corrupt all they touch; cause they need more troops.

We also talked about what started the War and how one gets hired as a mercenary for the War. It turns out he was one such and has a dark secret about how he survived that he will take to his grave.

We talked of many other things concerning the Blood War. This man was most informative. When I asked about where the War is fought he mentioned the Gray Waste. Something about that was familiar to me and I asked him to tell me about it. He said it was also called the Glooms. Gray in every sense of the word. Only the night hags rule there, the Gray Ladies of the Waste.

Our discussion on how to survive the War was most interesting as it developed into a discussion about why the fiends haven't taken over Sigil. He said that the Lady won't let them and that she, all by herself, holds them back.

Going on he said that just cause they can't butcher each other doesn't mean spies, recruitment and backstabbing don't still go on. I listened. He said they look for boys fresh off the Planes with a little greed in their hearts that they can make part of their army. He stopped speaking to peer closely at me. He asked if they recruited me once. I said perhaps.

He said that the War leaves a scar. I'd know and I'd know I never wanted to go back. I began to get a familiar, scalp-tingling headache as a memory surfaced. I tried to recall the memory. (1500)

The lecture hall faded from view as terrible visions seeped up from the base of my mind. Visions of a place where seasons are like nothing I'd ever felt or heard or tried to shut out. A place where prayers go unheard, falling like stones to earth ... vein-colored lightning slashes across things that were once sky, but now boil beneath my feet and scream when I brushed against them.

I let the memory continue ... I ran at the head of a large band of men, passing through dark canyons where the walls quiver moistly and beat like a heart, wearing only my own blood as clothing. As last I stood in a place where the ashen gray terrain slithered like a mass of snakes, coiling around my ankles and whispering my evil to the earth. I marched endlessly, silently through this colorless land, where fatigue seems to live and hunted me like a shade over the wastes whipping me with despair.

I let the memory continue ... In time, me and the men following me came upon a had sitting upon a mound of gigantic, writhing larvae, poking at one of the slime-covered things with a broken talon. I indicated for one of the men to run forward and speak with her; the hags grating voice carried to my ears.

I let the memory continue ... She said I would speak with him, and then cackled. Her eyes gleamed as she pointed me out to the man. The handsome one that leads your ragged column. I would speak with him. And that was all I could recall.

I came back to myself and heard Ghysis ask if I was feeling all right. I said I was fine and asked if the fiends recruited often. He nodded and said I could be sure of that. Sigil was the best place for that.

I asked if there was any more advice on surviving the War. He said yes, whatever you do don't talk to any fiend about the Blood War or any deva or

archon for that matter. All of them get mighty touchy about the subject. It's their reason for living.

I asked if there was anything else. He nodded and said don't go through any portal unless you're piking sure you know where it goes. I asked for anything further. He said that whatever you do never sign on for a tour of duty, no matter how much jink they flash in your mug. Certain death and signing on for a tour in the Blood War are the same thing.

I asked why that was. He said that chances are when you sign up they peel you so your tour of duty is until time itself grind to a halt. Even death wouldn't be a release because then you sink into the Lower Planes and get dredged back up as something worse. Then they have you for all eternity.

I asked how he would get out of a tour contract. He said unless they don't want you, you don't have much chance. He said that outwitting a tanar'ri is risky, but it can be done, but the baatezu are much more dangerous with their contracts. Sign one of those and you're damned for life.

I asked him to continue. He said you might try a little garnish, try and dawb them and they might let you make a run for it, but where would you go? There are so many hells.

I said so dying in the Blood War is especially bad? He said if you were evil, sure. If you're good, you'd go to another Plane to spend your afterlife, but you'd still be a deader.

I asked if he could explain that. He said should go talk to the death lecturer if I wanted the dark on that.

I asked about the tanar'ri and the baatezu. When talking about the baatezu he said that they usually assemble their forces on Avernus, the first layer of Baator. I asked what it was like. He grimaced as if recalling the place caused physical anguish. He said it was inhabited by the damned and those that prey on the damned. The red-flecked lands of noxious sands and blistering fires that scream across the landscape. That was his taste of Baator, the layer of Avernus.

I asked what forces served in the Blood War. He listed many of them and I asked for details on those he mentioned.

Finally I asked if he'd tell us no tales of the Blood War. He relented and gave us an example. He said they'd get some mortal mercenaries together, maybe a drop of a few million strong and let them slaughter each other for no real reason at all. Guess where those souls go?

I asked where? He said their souls sink into the Planes of evil they fought on where they can be ripped from the soup of the plane and set to fight again as lemurs or manes or whatever.

Splinter

I asked him if there was a linguist here who could help me with the dodecahedron. He said Finam might be able to help me.

I asked where I could find him. He said my best chance would be at his home. He told me to go south of the Festhall entrance, between Yhana's Galleria and the Apothecary. He said I would see it on my right; a small five-sided home west of the Curiosity Shop.

I then asked to see the public sensoriums.

Public Sensoriums

Lady Thorncombe

I bumped into her in one of the sensoriums. She was wandering about, her eyes focused on nothing in particular. I greeted her, but no matter what I asked she ignored me, almost as if she was in a trance.

Going to a guide, I availed myself of all the sensoriums. I felt a memories stir during the use of these stones and felt all were worth experiencing. **(750 each for standard.)**

I then partook of the extravagant sensoriums. Again I felt memories stir, though they were stronger this time. **(1500 each.)**

Private Sensoriums

The private sensoriums were much more ornate, richly decorated and full of tropical plants.

Quell

While there we met Quell. He was chewing on something and muttering softly to himself. After chewing a second ball, which seemed to turn into a huge fly, he finally noticed us. I asked him what he knew about Ravel. He asked if I always traipsed about molesting mages with my ignorant prattle? The candy shot from his mouth and landed on the floor. I said I was sorry about the candy.

He said it was tasty, too. Then he snarled and ranted about knowing my proper place. Apparently, manners were not taught in mage school. I said I only meant to ask him some questions.

He said he cared not and called me more names. I don't know what was in that candy, but I wanted no part of it. This berk was barmy as a bat. He insisted that I not come back until I had a gift and recommended exotic candy. Well, aren't we special?

Longing ...

[Keep choosing dialog one to get through this and you'll get the experience rewards.]

The first stone that I touched was searing blue and fixed to its base by melting. A cunning work that made the stone appear to weep. It is longing and as I touched it I saw my past, not my view, but another's, a woman's. What have I done? How many sins have I committed in these past lives? **(2000)** How many have I betrayed? **(2000)**

As I emerged from the experience I found myself screaming, bloody tears falling from my eyes, running in streams down my arms, my hands to coat the stone. Her blood. And I ... can't WARN her ... and I can't stop crying ...

Annah was staring at me, terrified. She looked like she wanted to help, but was paralyzed. She asked if I was all right.

I said I just needed a moment. She asked what I saw in that fiend stone.

Longing, I told her. She frowned, confused, then said she was longing to break that stone she was to tear me up so. (2000) I said no, I just needed a moment and I'd be fine.

I held the experience tight to me, for as much as I wanted to hurl it away I knew it was important to remember it. I could feel both sides at once. Perhaps during this incarnation I am to learn the depths of self-loathing and remorse. I turned from the stone and left.

Hunting Trek

I was standing in a circle of white tents deep in the woods. The trees surrounding me are, by far the largest I'd ever seen. Then I felt a strange prickling at the back of my skull.

I continued the experience ... My surroundings melted into a colorless smear, then resolved into what looked like the interior of a large, gray sphere. Across from me stood a figure almost identical to myself. His eyes flashed and a mad smile split his features. He said he knew I would come.

I gave him greetings. He sneered his greetings and said he bid my murderous tongue to be silent. My pretend innocence was laughable.

I asked who he was. He said didn't I know? Didn't all those filthy, lying thrice-be-damned journals tell me who he was? Those journals that were so conveniently left for him when he awoke. Those journals that called him an incarnation. Hah! Burned them all, he did, all that he found ...

Not one of my better selves. I asked him what they said. He said they spoke lies, lies and nothing more. Filth about a man who forgets himself, other incarnations of preserving their experiences in writing so later lives could benefit

... Thieves! It's my life; mine! You all want to steal my body and you won't have it!

I asked where I was.

He said this? Just a little trap is all. He realized that killing we body thieves might not be enough; he might have to trap me, ensnare me for eternity. I might have realized by now that there's no way out of this sensory stone. My mind is locked there. I should note the rather sparse surroundings he'd left for me, all to help the madness set in good and quick while my flesh rots away.

He seemed mighty pleased with himself. I said I had some questions, then. He looked away indignantly. I asked if he created the trapped dodecahedron. He said he didn't know what I was babbling about. Heh. All right, it was him. Brilliant, wasn't it? He wanted to know if I played with it a bit and lose a finger or an eye? He chortled merrily.

I asked if he put those tattoos on. He said no, that one incarnation, that practical one did. He'd tried to burn them off, but the skin regenerates with the tattoos still on them. He'd tried to tear them off, stain them with acid ... I hate them ...

I asked why. He said it was maddening to feel the eyes upon him, reading his body like a book. I read the tattoos. His eyes went wild and he shouted at me to stop reading him.

I kept reading them. His eyes grew even wilder. He told me to stop and stop now. He was warning me. He turned his back and I could see the list of tattooed warnings that Morte once read to me at the Mortuary. There was the line at the bottom warning me not to trust the skull. He grew more and more frantic as I kept reading. He warned me for the last time to stop.

I said fine, how did he make this trap. He said he couldn't tell me that. The magicks used in its creation were lost, even to him. It was clever though ... One experience hidden beneath the other so that no flesh but his own would set it off.

I said that if his flesh set it off, wouldn't that mean that I was him? He'd trapped himself.

He said but ... that's not ... I was one of the ... He thought he put in safeguards. How could I ... He be so foolish! He wrung his hands together biting his lower lip. How to get out, how? He'd forgotten. Then he said he was the only one who could release me and that he would not do. If I was him then I could release myself.

I willed my own release. (500)

The Messenger

[Choose dialog one and keep doing so to get the experience.]

Reluctantly I entered the last sensorium and began the sensation.

As I closed my eyes I felt the skin along my arms become numb. I was tired, so tired. I tried to blink, but darkness remained. My lids were soft and sluggish. I was sitting on dirt and the smell of blood and herbs was strong, but why was I here? I came here to-- I felt a growing panic ...

I tried to get my bearings and a voice spoke. Shrill and scratchy, that of an old woman. I tried to move, tried to open my eyes, tried to speak, but all I could do was croak like a sickly bird.

I was trapped by this old hag. Ravel? Could it be her? (6000) SHE took my eye? Or is this another? There will be a price for this, I swear it.

My arms are gone; my legs were hacked off at the knees. Yet I felt numb and there is no pain, only fear. Someone is looking down on me ...

I looked up. I saw a horrid, bluish face, grinning with yellowed tusks. She held out a plate to me, spearing my eyeball off of the plate with a talon so that I could see it. She said she was pleased that I had returned.

I said that I had many questions for her. She said she had no time for answers. Know this: I must find her. I asked how? She said she was beyond knowing, in a Lady's place. Now listen to Ravel for there is much I must do to find her: find the door, know the key, and then unlock the key.

I asked how I was talking to her if this was someone else's experience. Of stones and experiences and telling will Ravel to, but not the telling of how she spoke to me now.

I asked what was the door she spoke of. She said the door was not a finished thing, as least when she last gazed on it. Go to the place of forges and steel; perhaps there I will find the door that takes one to her.

I asked what was the key. She said that to know the key speak to one of the knowing ones—many there are in the Festive Hall, many, yet only one there who knows the knowing of what the key is that I needed. Loosen his tongue and many secrets shall a-spill forth.

I asked what she meant by unlock the key. She said a-knowing the key was not enough. Knowing it and unlocking it, two tasks that must be joined for at times a thing knows not its nature, but I was no stranger to that.

I said farewell. She said to return and she would give me what help she could, but in the end one question remained. I asked what she meant. Her eyes blazed like fires the red light turning her face the color of blood. She said this one question she asked: What can change the nature of a man?

I felt a tremor pass through me, like thunder and I burned as the experience left me.

Curiosity Shop

Standish

The sole clerk scurried about the shop, dusting, cataloguing and moving things about for the place's proprietress. I noted that he smelled slightly of onions. He glanced at me nervously as I approached. He said that he could not speak with me. His mistress would not allow it.

I said I only had a few questions. He asked me to go before his mistress noticed him talking to me. I asked about her. He said her name was Mistress Vrischika and he was Standish, her servant, her slave. He committed a crime and was sentenced to slavery. He begged me to let him be so he would not be beaten. I did as he wished.

Vrischika

She was attractive, though her features were sharp and her appearance somewhat disturbing. She had blue-black skin and bright yellow eyes. While she examined me a pair of bat-like wings unfolded from her back, then closed again.

She noticed Morte and then asked if I was the scarred man who'd been going around asking all the questions. She asked if she could help me.

I asked what this place was. She said the items in this shop were the result of trading and traveling across the Planes. I had needs and she could sate them.

I examined all that was in her store, which took a great deal of time.

I bought a Chocolate Quasit and the Figurine for now and left the shop.

Thug Boss

Just south of Finam's house I saw a well-muscled man who, while well armed and large, looked too clean to be a typical street thug. As I walked up to him he asked what I was looking at and told me to pike off before he had to scrag us.

Annah asked what he was talking about and called him an idiot. She said that Scrag meant nagged by the Hardheads and called him a few other choice names as well.

He glared at Annah, but fell silent. I said he seemed well-groomed for a thug.

He said I should stop shaking my bone-box. This was his territory and I'd be leaving it quick if I didn't want his bloods to tear me apart. I was all a-quiver.

Annah snickered and told him to rattle on. She said she'd like to see how long he'd last dropped in the middle of the Hive acting as he was. Annah turned to me and said we should be off. No use wasting our time with this wee-stemmed basher would-be.

His face flushed angrily and he gnashed his teeth in frustration. He said that was it and told his bloods to get us.

I fought him. He struck one good blow, but that was it. I “Justified” him until he was nice and tender ... and dead. My three companions finished off the thug lieutenants quickly. Apparently crime in the Clerk’s Ward did pay. These berks had much better loot than normal. In addition to their weapons and jewelry we took two spell scrolls off of them and a Cranium Rat Charm. I also found a steel box. An awful, sickly sweet odor wafted from it.

Mertwyn’s Head

On a whim I talked to the box. As I held it up to examine it I heard a man’s voice speak from within. He asked if anyone was there and said his name was Mertwyn.

I said yes, I was here and gave him greetings. He asked if I’d seen his body. I said I had in the Civic Festhall. He asked if he could persuade me to return him to his body. I said I would do so.

He thanked me and said he would hold off speaking further until he was with his body again. I said alright and farewell.

Finam’s House

We looked about and Annah found a gold bracelet in a drawer she persuaded to open. There were also a few coppers and a handkerchief in a different dresser.

Finam the Linguist

He greeted us and said he was Finam. He said that he cared little for guests so unless we had business with him he wished us to leave.

I unfolded the dodecahedron to a page with writing on it and asked if he could translate. He took it in his hands and examined it. He said the language was long dead, known to virtually no one. He thought his father knew this language and may have been the only man in Sigil who could understand it. He recognized it from his father's notes, but he could not translate it.

I asked if he still had the notes. He said they'd be of no use to me if I was looking to translate anything and the few books he had pertaining to that language disappeared around the time of his murder.

I said I would like to see them just the same. He said he wasn't certain where they were just now and he was looking for something else at the moment—his research journal.

I said I would recover his journal for him and asked where he'd last had it. He said he wasn't certain, but it might have found its way into the Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts.

I said I would look there, but did he say his father was murdered?

He said his father was strangled. He'd left to tutor someone and was found dead in a side chamber of the Civic Festhall. The killer was never found.

I asked if his father knew the language and could teach it. He said his father could and did. I asked if his father was interred in the Mortuary. He said no, his ashes were kept here. Why? He said if I was a necroscope he had no wish to speak of these things any further.

I looked around and found his father's ashes on the north wall on top of the dresser that had the "reluctant" drawer. I used Stories-Bones-Tell on the remains.

A voice stirred the ashes asking why he had been summoned. I said to answer questions. He said I should ask so he may return to his thoughts.

I asked who he was. He said he was Fin. A student of his murdered him so that he could not teach another the language that he had taught the student. The tongue of the Uyo, it was. He knew of none who spoke it, save himself and that one, murderous student.

I described to him the writing on the dodecahedron. He said he could teach me that language. It would please him to do so, in fact, if only to spite that student. First he wanted to know what languages I spoke.

I learned what I could from the spirit. As he spoke the lost language the familiar throbbing in my skull returned signaling another memory ... memories of this language. I recalled letters, words and phrases until the language was once more revealed to me in its entirety.

I continued to study. **(8000)** There was another memory, though, bubbling to the surface, a darker one. It filled me with unexplained pangs of guilt and I dreaded the knowledge I would find. The knowledge of another betrayal I had committed.

Still, I allowed the memory to surface ... **(4000)** At last, I recalled Fin myself. I remembered his gentle voice, his kind manner, his schooling me in the language of the Uyo. I also remembered my gnarled hand wrapped around his frail throat as I crushed his larynx and ensured that the contents of my journal, hidden and thrice trapped, written in this dead language, would be forever safe from prying eyes.

As I feared, my former mad self, the incarnation from the sensorium, had murdered Fin. I confessed to Fin, telling him it was I who had murdered him. Such a burden of sin lays on my soul, if I still have one, that I shall never be free.

He was silent for a time. When he spoke again his voice was full of sorrow. He said but why would I come to him once more? Had I forgotten what I'd been taught?

I said no and yes. It was difficult to explain, but it must have been a former self of mine that murdered him. Each time I die, I reawaken, as if from long asleep ... having forgotten everything ... who I was and what I've done.

He said he thought he understood. He said he sensed my regret and would forgive me.

I thanked him for his mercy and bade him farewell. Fin in his one life had found more grace than I in my thousands.

Dodecahedron

Having learned the language of the Uyo I unfolded the device and read from it.
(10000)

It was evident that this journal had indeed been written by the mad self that I had met in the sensorium. There were only a handful of completely coherent sections.

I browsed through them all. Even those I could read were half-mad. At least I now knew which one of me thought to swallow that ring which lodged in my intestines. This poor self was also the one who had talked to Ravel.

I learned of yet another death by my hands of someone who had helped me.

There was a cryptic answer from an unknown source that was revealing. I read the whole of it, learning many names that I had been called and that only one piece of my scattered self was of import. If I could regain that my life would be mine once more. There would be a price, but the price would buy me a chance. Without the chance I was doomed. I must find my mortality before my mind is lost to me as well.

And lastly, I learned the code for my legacy, though this mad self swore to destroy it. So weary, I wished for rest. The burden of all this death ...

We moved on to secure Finam's journal.

Art and Curio Shop

Yvana

On the way we passed by an art and curio shop. We ventured in to see their wares. Near the entrance was a well-dressed elderly woman. She stood quietly and nodded in my direction. It was then that I noted that she had no pupils; her eyes were entirely white. She gave greetings, said she was Yvana, and welcomed us to her gallery.

When I said I had some questions she said my voice was heavy with age and wounds and asked if I would permit her to touch my face. I said yes.

She smiled and ran her hands gently over my skin. She said so many scars, both old and new. They seem to ... She touched the side of my throat, flushed,

then pulled away. She asked my pardon and said she was curious to see how far they went.

I said it was fine; the scars were everywhere. She nodded her understanding.

We talked about several things. I asked her if she knew what the little cube-like toy creature from the Curiosity Shop was. She said it was more than just a well-crafted toy modron; that was certain. She thought it might be some sort of puzzle-box, or portal key.

I asked what a modron was. She said that modrons were a race of lawful, orderly beings. They come in many shapes and forms, each filling a different level in their rigid hierarchy. She thought this sort was called a quadrone.

She also knew somewhat of Ravel.

We then went through her gallery, examining the different works.

A large statue appeared not to be a statue at all, but a mage, caught in mid curse. I examined the many fine cracks and found that a piece could be broken off if I had a small enough hammer.

One painting along the northeast wall was a portrait of the Gray Hag of Oinos. I stared at it, so reminiscent of Ravel as I had seen her in the sensorium. As I left I felt a memory stir. I tried to recall the memory. (300)

I was standing, confused, in a maze of briars. The hideous crone from the painting was before me, cackling wildly. I gritted my teeth in frustration, wondering why she was laughing at me. She said her poor, dear, lovely man-thing. Why, that was my first wish. She pointed a single, bony, clawed finger at

my forehead. My temples began to throb painfully ... and I could remember nothing more.

A strange sculpture called the Dark Birds of Ocanthus was interesting, even if I briefly lost my hand trying to grab one. If I could find something that would keep these birds cold, I might be able to take one.

Yvana

Now that I'd been through her gallery I had questions about the works. We talked about all of them, as she seemed to enjoy it and many of the pieces had intrigued me.

Of greatest interest was what she had to say about the Dark Birds of Ocanthus. It was said that that sheet of ice was the final destination of the River Styx and that the recollections of all that had plunged into the Styx's memory-destroying waters still lay frozen within the ice. I asked if the waters of the Styx destroyed one's memories, would the ice from Ocanthus do the same? She said she would assume so.

I turned out that I was right about the portrait of the Gray Hag. It was Ravel.

Apothecary

Pestle Kilnn

The proprietor was an odd fellow whose skin seemed to writhe and ripple across his body. As I watched, his right eye moved independently of the left and focused on me. A second later the left one flicked to look my way, then reverted to its original position. A strange gurgling issued from his throat.

I said hello. He said he was Pestle, the – gugh – alchemist. He pointed at himself again, this time with his left index finger and said da name's Kilnn. Hgrk.

I asked if he was all right. He said he was. Hgak. His throat convulsed for a moment, then relaxed. A large, green and glowing pustule burst from the side of his neck. He asked if I needed something. Ghok. His throat clenched again and a wave of quivering flesh swallowed the pustule back beneath the skin of his throat. He coughed violently then relaxed.

I asked what happened. He said he'd had too much to drink.

Remind me not to have what he's having. I asked too much of what? He said potions, too many potions. His mouth slid down beneath his chin, his left nostril formed another one. Da most he ever drank. Of polymorphing they were and brewed in Limbo.

I asked if I could help. His eyes turned inwards to look at each other, then back to me. He said he dunno. Fng. He shuddered; the mouth below his chin moved up to envelope the one his nostril formed. He said this sort of thing happens quite often; they couldn't seem to – Fnug – help but sample the stock. If I found a way to help the two of us would be grateful.

I said I had another question. He shook his head, saying that he worked in the stock room all day.

I said the old engineer in the Foundry told me I needed to get a sample of my blood and skin for his machine to work. I needed him to do that for me. He said very well. He removed a small section of skin from my forearm, placing it into the bottle along with a small quantity of my blood. He asked if I needed anything more.

I said I wanted to purchase something. He had a wonderful selection. Every charm imaginable was there for the purchase. After looking it all over we left, not having many coppers to our name.

Eli Havelock

On the way to the Brothel we saw a man standing near the establishment. He was scanning his surroundings disinterestingly and picking his fingernails. Though dressed in silk and velvet he looked unsavory and more than a little dangerous.

I greeted him. In a low, gruff voice he told us to pike off. I said I had some questions. He still said to pike off. I asked why was he here, just to be surly with passers-by?

He was quiet for a moment, and then broke into a crooked smile. He said that was good. Then he said he was a tutor at the Civic Festhall. Name's Havelock – Eli Havelock. He said he taught the art of subterfuge.

And here I thought he taught etiquette. I asked if he meant thievery. He curled his lips in disgust. He said he spent five tours as a reconnaissance operative in the War of Lies. Scout it my title! I teach the ways of stealth and spy-craft, not common thievery.

I gave my apologies and said I meant no offense. I asked if he could train me. He frowned sourly and said he didn't know. He'd had enough of teaching petty pickpockets and curious Sensates for the time being. He muttered that he wasn't sure why he agreed to do it in the first place.

I said that perhaps it was because by teaching others you make them aware of your own skill. He hummed at me.

I said at the same time he defended the nobility of his skills by assuring them that he was no common thief, but a scout and spy, a master of subterfuge.

He nodded and said there was no denying it. He said it was sort of sorry when you looked at it that way. I said I didn't think so. Those of his trade are often misunderstood, thrust unfairly into the same category as footpads and brigands.

He said right again I was. He thanked me. He said he'd wasted enough time out here and was heading back to the Festhall. If I still wanted to train, that would be where I could find him. I said that perhaps I'd see him there. (12000)

[I should note here that after buying 2 Presence tattoos and one Greater Presence tattoo and carrying the Axe of Ascension I could boost my charisma by 5 points. Add the spell Friends to that (which you can cast multiple times) and I don't look half-bad. Most of the time I use the Tattoo of the Soul in place of one of the Presence tattoos. In combat I use the Tattoo of the Warrior and the Tattoo of the Lost Incarnation and switch to Justifier.

Justifier is hard to put down because of its great speed (a hammer with a speed of 2!) and damage, plus the added regeneration. Though Ascension has its merits as well.]

Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts

Fall-From-Grace

Past the entrance was what looked like a waiting area with many divans and couches. A ... woman? Angel? I do not know what ... was sitting there with

her wings folded. She was the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen. I said hello and wondered that my voice betrayed not how fast my heart beat.

She asked how she might help me. I asked who she was. She said she was called Fall-From-Grace. She observed that I was new to Sigil.

I said I suspected I had been here for quite some time, actually. She said indeed? I said yes, but that was a long tale, perhaps longer than I know. I was more interested in what this place was.

She said it was the Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts.

I asked what kind of brothel this was. She said she had established this brothel to give those lustful fevers that strike the mind more avenues of expression rather than the simply carnal. She said much pleasure could be had in conversation and engaging in the verbal arts with others. I hoped she had better command of this establishment than she did of the Common Tongue, since slating meant to pummel or thrash and that was presumably not her intent.

[Throughout the rest of this section I will use the word slake where they used slate. I can only think that they accidentally combined the words slake and satiate and no one noticed.]

Morte said it sounded dull. She assured us it was not.

Slowly and clearly I said so this is a brothel where there's no intercourse? She said only of a psychological nature.

I asked why she established this place. She said that was an odd question. She said she didn't think anyone had asked her that question, at least not directly. I said that I did not mean to be so direct, that I was merely curious.

She said no apologies were necessary. She was more than happy to discuss the reasons if I wished. I said I would rather like to hear them. She said that part of the answer to my question requires that I know that she was a member of the Sensates.

I asked if that was why she established the brothel. She said the brothel was intended to slake the lusts of even the hardened intellectual. I said that I could understand that and that the women here must be special indeed.

She said that the women were aspiring Sensates. I said so the ladies here are ladies-in-training so to speak? She said yes. She hoped that by learning the art of language and its subtleties that the patrons and the students here may learn more about themselves. One is only as limited as his or her command of the language.

I asked about the wings on her back. Annah said she was one of the fiends, the succubi, she was. She'll sell my soul to the Lower Planes, so she will.

Grace said Annah was correct. She was a lesser tanar'ri, a succubus. She said she was afraid they were a little too common for their own good. Most of her race spent their time seducing mortals with various pleasures of the flesh.

I said and you? She said she would like to think that she had distanced herself from that. It was ultimately a trivial and nonproductive way for one to spend one's time here in the multiverse. There was so much more to life, didn't I agree?

I said perhaps so and asked further questions. I asked if she'd ever heard of a hag named Ravel. She said she was familiar with the name. Rumors cluster thickly about that name and most tend to discount her as a myth, but she

suspected that Ravel did exist and that she made quite an impression in the Cage during her stay. She asked why I wanted to know.

I said that I intended to seek her out. She said truly? She wanted to know why. I said I needed information Ravel had. She asked if this information was available from no one else. I said I suspected that only Ravel possessed the knowledge I needed.

She said to consider that if Ravel does exist then she is extremely powerful and cunning. To search for her is a quest not to be undertaken lightly. I said that I realized that and asked her if she knew anything else about Ravel.

She said Ravel was one of the hags of the Gray Waste and that she was believed to possess powers and cunning far beyond those of her sisters. She almost undid the Cage itself when she came. Now she existed only as a figure in children's stories. She said she expected the Lady dealt with Ravel as she dealt with all threats to Sigil.

I asked how was that. She said Ravel was most likely sent to a maze, one of the Lady's prisons. I asked what the mazes were. She said the Lady was said to have the power to take pieces of Sigil and make a maze. I told her to go on. She said the piece of Sigil she takes holds the prisoner; there was no escaping being mazed. It can happen any time.

I asked her to go on. She said it was thought that there was a portal that leads out of each maze, but they are difficult to find. Perhaps they exist to give the prisoner hope or to torture them. Perhaps both.

I asked if she could tell me more of the Plane Ravel was from. She said the Gray Waste was a blighted Plane that lay between Baator and the Abyss. It was frequently a battleground in the Blood War.

I asked if there was anyone else who might know about her. She said that someone in the Festhall might know more.

I said that I came there looking for help. Perhaps she could help me. She asked what I was looking for. I said that I seemed to have lost my memories and in so doing had lost myself. She asked if I'd been stricken with amnesia and did I know how it happened?

I said not really, that I could remember. I awoke on a slab in the Mortuary and everything before that was black.

She was surprised I'd awakened in the Mortuary. I said that I thought the Dustmen mistook me for being dead ... or I was dead. All I knew was that I regenerate quickly. I could be immortal, but I didn't even know that for sure.

She looked at me with new eyes. She asked if she could touch the scars on my body. I said yes. She traced the edges of my scars and followed the curves where they blended into some of my tattoos. She said the scars did look like they would take several lifetimes to accumulate.

I said they certainly had, though some of them were more recent. She said some of the wounds would have been fatal to a normal man. She asked what I intended to do now. I said that I needed to get my memories back and my life back. I intended to scour the Planes and search inside myself until I can piece together who I am and what brought me to this state.

She said that she must say she had never met a man who had lost himself in the literal sense. She asked forgiveness, but said my condition was intriguing. I said frightening was more like it. I didn't like not knowing who I was, what I might have done, who my enemies were OR my friends.

She said she had offended me and gave her apology. I said never mind; no harm was done. She said that if it would help I was welcome to tour the Brothel. Several of her students were versed in the verbal arts. Perhaps some of them will be able to re-kindle my memories.

I asked if she wished to join me in my travels. Annah stiffened, then muttered under her breath that we donnae need the likes of her.

Morte said he was ALL for the succubus coming with us. The Powers knew that Annah was about as fun as passing a caltrop through your bowels.

Annah said that he'd best latch his bone-box or she'd rattle him so hard they'd be picking his teeth off of the spire.

Grace said the offer seemed to be rather forward of me. She was obviously ignoring the others. I said that I'd rather be honest with my intentions. She seemed extremely pleasant and well versed in the ways of the Planes. A companion with that kind of knowledge would be welcome.

Morte said now wait just a minute! He was the one well versed in the Planes. That was his job.

I said that having two people knowledgeable about the Planes in our band seemed pretty smart to me. Besides, I said pleasant, too, Morte.

Morte said pleasant on the eyes maybe. Looked to him like all some chit had to do was show a little skin and I'd sign her right up. After a moment of silence he said not that he minded, really. Just thought he'd mention it.

I said that was noted. I said to Grace that she should excuse me if I was being too forward, but would she care to travel with us?

She said that she appreciated my candor and she would counter with some of her own, asking why she should travel with us.

I said was she not interested in traveling with an immortal amnesiac that was searching the Planes for himself? She said she would be extremely interested.

I said then she would like to travel with us, then? She said if I wished her to then there was something I must do for her. There were ten students in this establishment. She wanted me to speak to all of them and then return to her with my thoughts.

I said I would go speak to them, then and would return when I have spoken to all of them.

Modron

I saw three very strange looking creatures that seemed to be observing us. As I approached, Morte broke in to say that we were in a building full of some of some of the sexiest chits this side of the multiverse and I was stopping to talk to modrons?

I asked what he could tell me about them. He said what's there to say? Annoying little clockwork pests. They're always working to impose law and order on the multiverse. Not good, mind you, just law. I gave Morte my apologies, but said I was talking to the modron.

Morte sighed and said fine, whatever, but don't say he didn't warn me. I probably won't get anywhere with them, though. They're an odd lot to talk to.

I greeted them. The nearest one spoke in a metallic reverberating voice. It said my greeting was returned. I was asked to identify myself to them. I said I was Adahn.

The creature tilted slightly forward, and then back on its legs. Whether bowing or nodding I couldn't say. He said they were modrons, quadrone type, winged variant.

I asked if he knew what the little cube-like toy creature was.

The fellow in front of me looked exactly like the toy I bought at the Curiosity Shop. He said that the object was a portal cube. The user positions the appendages of the portal cube in such a manner that it will activate. Once activated the cube will transport the user to whatever destination it was tuned to during its creation.

I asked where this cube would take its user. He said they did not have that information. Over 97% of all portal cubes function in a slightly different manner. Should the subject desire to activate the portal they would have to determine its method of operation and destination by experimentation.

I asked what the proper position was to activate this cube. He said they do not have that information. Over 97% ... yada, yada, yada. Same story as before. Morte was right. These guys put the B in BORING.

Modron Cube

Now that I knew it was a portal I again took out the cube to examine it. I fiddled with the thing for quite a while before finding the right combination to trigger the device. I found that moving the left wing made it whirl, and then moving the right

wing made it hum and grow warm. Finally, rotating the right arm caused a whir, click and in a blinding flash I was ...

Rubikon, aka Modron Maze

Elsewhere ...

We were in a square room and a modron stood in the center. We walked up to it and were welcomed to Rubikon, the dungeon construct. He was unresponsive to any further questions so we went into the dungeon.

We met a number of "low threat mechanical constructs" that were easy to kill. At first, we did try talking to them, but, while the conversations were nonsensical and, at times amusing, they amounted to a machine saying "Boo" to frighten us.

Eventually we made our way to some sort of control room where a number of modron were working various devices.

Modron

While the other modrons in the room were no more informative than the greeter we'd met at the entrance, the modron in the center of this room had more to say. It turned out that they were having difficulties with the construct and that they'd had to shut it down until it could be reset. Until it was reset, I couldn't leave. It couldn't be reset without an order from the director, but they didn't have a director. The only way to get a new director was to reset the cube ... but they couldn't reset the cube without a new director ... Talking to these fellows was really making my head hurt. I suggested that I fill in for the missing director. That satisfied the modron and he let me reset the cube.

We set the device to normal and explored for a bit, but eventually we had all we could carry and came back to the control room to leave and went back to the Clerk's Ward. We had come across several lenses of different colors and properties as well as a number of special bolts for a crossbow. We held onto these for now to see if they would have a purpose.

Clerk's Ward

Having a great deal of loot we made our way again to the Curiosity Shop to sell our booty. It turned out that the Magic Item, Bag o' Money and Goody weren't worth diddly at any shop we tried, so we stashed them in the Brothel, just in case and went back into the dungeon.

Rubikon

This time I set it to hard. It also turned out that you could use the Rubikon as a link to other Planes so we could enter it and travel anywhere.

We met a number of high threat constructs that were no more adept at conversation than their lower threat brethren. They were much tougher to kill and dealt a great deal of damage. These fellows also had much better loot. As before, we numbered the rooms on our map so we could tell where they were as the rooms were nearly identical.

At one point, in the second room, I died. I was annoyed at first, expecting the usual hangover and long trip back, but I came to in the entrance of the Rubikon, had my health restored. I didn't even have a headache.

These constructs were tough and gave us all we could handle. I died many times, but I felt we were growing stronger by the experience.

Nordom

After much tracking and backtracking we came to a room different from the rest. It was almost not there. One side of the room looked as if it was being eaten by another Plane and a different sort of modron, if that's what it was stood in the room.

This modron had 4 arms and two legs and no wings at all, unlike every other one I'd seen. "He" was indifferent to our presence, staring instead at two crossbows cradled in his hands. I use "he" for convenience's sake. A multi-faceted lens dangled from the upper left corner of the cube as if it was designed to pop down over one of the cube's eyes like a scope.

I said hello. The cube chirruped and clicked several times as he blinked rapidly. He threw his hands up as if in surrender, though his crossbows had turned in his hands and were trained on me.

Morte said we should look out, that this modron had gone rogue. I asked what he meant. He said that sometimes modrons get a little chaos in them and when that happens, well, he guessed the best explanation was that rogue modrons are kind of like backwards.

I said so this was a backwards modron? The modron spoke saying a backwards modron = Nordom? He had a metallic, warbling voice, as if every word jumps off a spring and landed ... somewhere else. His mouth formed a sideways semi-circle, which might have been a smile. He said gratitudes, gratefuls.

I said I beg your pardon? He spoke a lot of gibberish that, if I understood correctly, he seemed to be saying he was happy that I had given him a name.

I asked if he was grateful I had identified him. He said his indemnification was compromised. Gratuities tendered for providing Nordom indemnification.

I said it was nothing. He asked me to indemnify myself. I said he meant identify, right? He said affirmative. I said my name was Adahn. He blinked once, but the metal shutters over his eyes remained shut.

I said he could open his eyes now. He said not closing eyes: Action Clarification for Adahn. Filing Information, Remembering. Adahn: Name catalogued. Nordom will not forget identity.

I said it had been great, but I had to get going. His crossbows clicked and twanged. His eyes spun and re-focused on the crossbows, holding the right one up to his side as if he was listening to it.

I asked if everything was okay. One of his eyes remained focused on the crossbow, which was clicking faintly. His other eye turned towards me. He asked if these ones could join me on my gurney. I asked if he meant journey.

He said affirmed. Permission granted? I said sure, we could always use a hand or four.

He “smiled” at me and his two crossbows clicked and twanged violently. He said gratefuls! Nordom and crossbows have been attached to a larger community.

I said I wouldn't be too grateful just yet. **(36000)**

After he joined the party I thought I should talk to him. He was still staring at his crossbows. I asked him what he was doing with them. He said action being performed on crossbows? Submit Request for Clarification: null crossbows present.

I told him he had a pair right in his hands. He said he did not employ crossbows. Next thing I knew they were pointed at me again. I said he did employ crossbows, he had two of them right there.

In the next instant they were pointing at Nordom. He seemed oblivious to their movements, his gaze remained focused on me. He still said he had null crossbows.

I said really? What did he call those two-clicking things he had in his hands? He said two clicking things held in opposable digits. He raised his fingers and waved the two crossbows, which started clicking and twanging irritably. Response: Objects = Gear spirits.

I asked what he meant by gear spirits? He said Response: Gear spirits. I said yes, but what are gear spirits? Morte popped in that as much fun as this was, prying a bar stool out of a baatezu's rear might prove more worthwhile than rattling our bone-boxes with this stupid polygon.

I asked Morte if he knew what gear spirits are. He said he had no idea. I said I thought he was the expert on the Planes. He said he knew more than a staggering, guttural amnesiac. One, there are no experts on the Planes. Two, he was the closest thing to one I was going to find and three, tread him with some respect. Why? See the second reason.

Nordom and I talked of many other things. It was most interesting when I asked how he was doing. He clicked his eyes closed and began to hum in what he called an "introspective cycle."

I waited for him to complete his analysis. In a few moments his eyes opened and he gave a report saying that he had gotten smaller and louder. His wings

had been replaced with arms: reason unknown. He said the change had resulted in information processing difficulties.

I asked if he thought his separation from the Source was what caused his perspective shift from the quieter, broader one to the smaller louder one. He stared at me for a moment, and then a slow whrrrr came from inside his frame and he KER-KLICKED. I wasn't certain, but it sounded like something clicked into place. (**Intelligence and constitution +1, 36000**)

I said his name to get his attention. He focused on me again and his voice seemed more level and controlled.

The battles we fought in the maze after finding Nordom were much easier. His bolts were most effective, especially after fitting him with one of the strange lenses we had found earlier. He also seemed to draw the wrath of the constructs to him, for some reason.

During this run through the maze we found the Rod of Modron Might. We also found that we could rest in the entrance.

Evil Wizard Construct

At last we came to a chamber different from the rest. It was perhaps twice the size and had a pentagram inscribed on the floor. Some bizarre sort of construct that was different from the rest stood in the center. As we approached he smiled and gave me a slight bow, saying so, we meet at last. His voice wasn't the monotone of the other constructs; it had expression. I returned its greetings.

He bowed again. He cocked his head to one side and asked if we did battle for control of Rubikon now or do we engage in conversation so that I may quench my curiosity? I said I was curious. Could we talk?

He nodded smartly at me. He said he must admit he would have been disappointed if that was not the case. We had a most interesting conversation. It turns out he had become self-aware and killed the modron director and then made it look like an accident. He was going to escape, but the assassination was read as an error and the construct collapsed. He had been imprisoned until I showed up.

His gratitude did not extend to letting me alone. He would hear nothing of the different thoughts I had regarding his freedom that did not involve my death and the enslavement of the modrons.

After trying every conversational tack I could think of, we left to talk it over.

Nordom

I talked to him about how he ended up in Rubikon. He told asked to submit chronology. I told him I would like to know. He gave a summary of what happened and why the Rubikon came to be. I told him to go on. He said that the director was lost in a field test. I asked what was this field test? He said scouting perimeters of Rubikon (Difficult) Dungeon construct to determine: Variances. Many deviations detected: errors considerable. He gave a low whine and shut his eyes with a click, then said Director of Create no return from field test.

I asked what happened to him. He said Citing/Rubikon Wizard/Megalomaniac Declaration of Freedom: Director encountered Error: Rubikon Wizard. Hypothesis: Director discounted strength of error. Sought to correct aberrance in Rubikon Wizard. Result: Director = Nulled.

I said that Rubikon sill had a director: me. Nordom stared at me for a moment, then a slow whrrrr came from inside his frame and he CLICKED. I wasn't sure, but thought something clicked into place.

I asked if he was all right. (**Intelligence and dexterity + 1, 36000**). He said Status Updated: Creative Director now re-affirmed in hierarchy. More of the warbling went out of Nordom's voice; it was more level, more controlled than it was.

I asked what sort of duties the Creative Director was responsible for. A tkkk-tkkk-tkkk began building in Nordom like a clock about to explode. He said Responsibilities of Director: (A) Integrity-Maintenance of Rubikon Project, (2) Order-Issuance to Rubikon battalion/workgroup. Period of obedience in accordance with Nordom obedience: Until Rubikon project halted, Creative Director = Nordom's superior.

Boy, have I got a headache ... I asked if that meant he'd do whatever I told him. He said affirmatory. I asked him what the Creative Director asked him to do. He whrrred as if thinking, then said Task Routine: Evaluation/Forward-Scout/Tidier: Assigned perimeter of Rubikon Project to evaluate, catalogue, tidy, then report. Report includes: Integrity Evaluations/Extermination of Project Errors/Wayward Item Recovery of Un-Tidiness.

I asked about all of these categories. From asking about Integrity evaluations I found that he could detect portals if he was within 10 feet of them. I asked him about Extermination of errors. He said order issued: Errors that persist in disobedience are to be rescinded. Obstacle: Nordom not up to specifications of task without suffering Null State.

I said so he couldn't stop these rogue constructs by himself? He said affirmatory. I said maybe if they'd given him better weapons. His crossbows

began clicking and twanging again. He listened to them for a moment then glanced at me. He said his crossbows wished to file a query followed by 33 pleas for help: Ammunition limited by suggestions of creator. Did I wish to provide new specifications for them?

I said sure and suggested something like a pyramid-shaped head, except the head splits into three when it hits something? His crossbows made a sudden PING sound and began spitting bolts out of their tops. Nordom opened two panels on his sides and the bolts sailed into them with a rattle. After ten or so, the crossbows stopped.

When I asked about wayward items he said that items appeared in the maze that were not part of the original design. Modrons were sent out to retrieve them. I asked if he found anything during his last trip. He said affirmatory.

I asked if he'd give me what he found. He said affirmatory and spit out a number of items at me. I asked how he evaluated items when he found them. Yet another PING issued from his innards and he spit out a new lens.

We then returned to talk again with the wizard. He would not agree to any peaceful resolution so we entered battle. It was a difficult fight. There were six heavy constructs as well as the wizard. Even having Morte taunt him and Dak'kon throw his anger at the evil wizard I barely made it in time to catch him from casting a second spell. When I read the scroll of Mechanus' Cannon I knew we had barely escaped, for even I might have succumbed to that puissant spell.

The evil wizard construct had a very nice collection of loot. Nearly 300 coppers, a Rod of Modron Might, a portal lens, a knot charm and a scroll of Mechanus' Cannon.

Nordom

After the battle, while we were resting in the entryway I talked to Nordom again. I said that I had some orders for him. I ordered him to focus more of his energy from his introspective routines and gear them more towards combat.

He said affirmatory. There was silence, then the shutters descended over his eyes again and I heard the tkk-tkk-tkk of recalibration from inside. Then it became a screeching and metal plates slid over his frame. **(Intelligence, armor class – 1, constitution and dexterity +1, 36000)**

After a little bit I again said I had some things I wanted to say to him. I ordered him to be more than he could be. I ordered him to become stronger, faster and more focused than he'd ever been. I said that I knew he could do this because I believed he could do this.

He stared at me silently. I told him to repeat the following words: I am a strong modron. I am a fast modron. I am a powerful modron. I am focused for my Director. When he spoke his voice was flat, focused, and emotionless as he repeated my words.

I told him to feel the words. Become stronger, faster, and more powerful. He continued to stare at me, but I felt my words take hold. I could feel a spark of the energy inside him. If I could coax it out ...

I told him to focus. **(Armor class –1, strength +2, constitution +1, 48000)** He said affirmatory. The pupils of his eyes clicked and became brilliant white dots, like tiny suns. He seemed sharper to my senses. I called his name. He said ORDER PROCESSED.

After talking to Dak'kon and studying the Art with him for a bit I spoke to Nardom again. I said I had some more orders for him. I told him I wanted him to clear out any excess baggage from his memory and use it to improve his logic and introspection routines. **(36000)**

Nardom said affirmatory and the shutters descended; the tkk-tkk-tkk went on followed by a grinding noise. Panels opened and baggage started flying out. **(Intelligence +1)** We ran around catching all we could. Most of it was junk, but one piece seemed more than it looked like. I gave it to Dak'kon to identify. He told me it was the Twisted Gear of Enoll Eva.

[You can give these specialized orders to Nardom once for each class, thief, fighter and mage, but you can only do this if you talk to the Evil Wiz before offing him.]

The Maze is 3x3 at easy, 6x6 at normal and 8x8 at hard. Only at hard will Nardom and the Evil Wizard appear. On hard, if you can survive the constructs, you can easily come away with 10000 copper or more. Each Portal Lens, which I recommend you always sell, nets you 3200 coppers. His Evilness always has one and the heavy constructs have a chance to. All of Nardom's equipment is worth a good deal of money, too, and in only one trip at normal and one and a quarter trips at hard I had at least a dozen of his lenses I could sell off as surplus.

You'll also get a boatload of experience. Each heavy construct is worth 4000 and the Evil Wiz nets you 10000. The word on the net is that the first time you talk to him you also get a 100k bonus, but I didn't see that in my game.

You can leave the maze at any time to go back to the game without having to re-explore the place so long as you don't reset the dungeon. So long as you don't do that the dungeon will stay just like it was when you last left it.

You can rest in both the entrance and the control room. So as long as you have access to the Maze you can rest wherever you are. Of course, you may have to walk a little to come back. They'll set you down in the Clerk's Ward, for example, but not in the Brothel. You'd have to walk there.]

Annah

I also talked to Annah again about thieving techniques. I was able to teach her something about lockpicks. (1000)

Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts

Dolora

After selling off our goods we went back to the Brothel to talk to the women as Grace had asked. Near the modrons we met a dark-haired, pale woman with unusual eyes the color of brushed steel. I said hello.

She spoke in a voice that had a far-away quality as if it was somehow not attached to her. She told us her name and asked if she could serve us.

I asked in what ways she could serve us. She said that she was able to debate any scholarly matter proficiently, if that was my wish. She was also well versed in games of strategy.

I asked about debating. She said she had no desire to educate her patrons. Should I wish to discuss a matter, she would be most pleased to choose a counterpoint and engage in debate.

I decided to choose a topic to see if I could best her. I chose one and began. The debate lasted long as we exchanged points and counterpoints, each attempting to undermine the other's position. As I spoke that familiar feeling came over me of a memory rising to the surface. I allowed it to come. (5000)

Memories of a great hall ... a vast place, full of the elite ... a formal ball was taking place. Before me was a small, impeccably dressed fellow who wore a golden medallion; it was emblazoned with a symbol I recalled as the "Sign of One." The two of us were engaged in a debate.

I continued the memory ... The man with the medallion was saying that something was impossible. I said on the contrary. I'd made several inarguable points and given him a number of examples. He simply didn't exist. He said I couldn't, if he were to accept that, he'd ...

The memory continued ... I said yes, he'd cease to exist. And without a flash of light or puff of smoke or any other fanfare, the man was gone.

I saw the onlookers oohing and aahing. Some even clapped. I gave a flourishing bow and walked away satisfied.

As I came back to myself I realized that Dolora was watching me closely. She asked if I was well. She said we might continue the discussion at another time. I said no; let us continue.

I was hard pressed to beat her infallible sense of logic; eventually I won out. She nodded in approval, saying I was a most skilled debater. She did feel, though

that had she time to perform some research, I might not have bested her. I gave her my thanks.

She said we could debate again and change sides if I liked. I asked if she was always so ruthless in a debate. She said yes, that Mistress Grace instructed her to show no mercy for another of her students always allows a patron to win after a lengthy debate. It was Mistress Grace's desire that she provide a different sort of experience for the clientele.

I asked if I could play a game now. She asked if I had one in mind. I said no, I really didn't remember any games.

She said here then, allow her to show me one. She brought out a thin, lacquered box that unfolded into a small board marked with a grid. The contents of the box were a number of stones, half black, and the other half white. She said that this game went by many names and offered to explain the rules.

I said yes, please. She explained the rules and they felt familiar to me. She said that while this game's rules were simple the complexity of play took a great deal of time to master. Then asked if we should play. I said yes, let's.

As we played I knew I'd played before. I recalled various ploys and strategies that had won me previous games and employed every trick I knew to beat her. Suddenly my creeping skin announced the attempt of another memory to surface.

I let it come ... **(5000)** Memories of a smoke-filled field of battle filled my mind ... atop a great hill overlooking the fighting I sat, mounted upon a massive, four-legged beast. The braying of horns carried my orders to the troops below.

The memory continued ... Even as I watched my forces divided, fleeing left and right as the foreign army fought its way up the hill to slay the enemy lord—me.

“Fools,” I thought as my lips curled into a wicked smile. “My knights shall charge down the hillside and stop their advance in an instant ... and at that moment my “retreating” footmen will fall to crush their flanks. Yet another victory soon to be mine.

I came to myself and knew Dolora was watching me intently again. She asked if I was feeling well, if I wanted to continue the game another time. I said no; let us continue the game.

She was an exceptional player, counteracting all but my most crafty moves, but eventually my feints and maneuvers won over her well-crafted strategies. She nodded approvingly as she put the game away. She said I was a fine player, perhaps a master. She commended me for my skill.

I thanked her and asked if she always played such a hard game. She said yes and again said that Mistress Grace wished that she present a true challenge, rather than something that might be more pleasing to one’s ego.

I said I had some other questions to ask. She cast her eyes to the floor and sighed. She said she was willing to serve me as a patron, but had no wish to answer other questions at this time. She made apologies, but she said I would have to bear with her for the time being.

I asked if there was anything I could help her with. She looked up from the floor and into my eyes. She said no, she feared not. Her troubles were a matter of the heart.

I asked if she was certain there was nothing I could do. She said no, she was not. Her first love, Merriman, possesses still the keys to her heart. So long as he has them she would not be free to love another.

I asked why she did not seek him out herself. She said that she could not leave this place. The reasons were personal and not to be shared with strangers, even ones who might bestow a kindness on her.

I said I would find Merriman and speak to him on her behalf. She nodded and smiled slightly. She said were I to find him and speak to him she would be most grateful. She told me to seek him out at the Festhall. I said I would return when I had found him.

Yves the Tale-Chaser

I met Yves in a private room to the right of the entrance. She offered to trade tales with me and I accepted, recounting all the many adventures I'd had thus far. She replied with tales of her own that I found most interesting. **(500 experience each time you tell her something)**

My companions also shared their tales. **(500 for each of their tales)**

[A note about Morte. At this point in my game he became a level 8 fighter. I talked to his teeth again and told them to be more powerful magical weapons. Periodically, Morte's teeth gain abilities. About every 3 levels, from what I can tell. So whenever he levels-up check his teeth.]

Kimasxi Adder-Tongue

In the next room was a tiefling girl. Over in a “stuck” drawer Annah found a gold earring. Around her neck was an inscription with her name. I said hello and she snapped at me.

Morte chimed in, saying I thought she was attractive, but whoah was he ever horribly mistaken. She sneered at Morte, then, looking below him said he had a sharp tongue for a stemless deader.

I let them have their head. After a bit she turned to me and asked if I was there to talk to her or what? I said what else could I do with her? She asked what I had in mind? Go ahead and give her a reason to say no.

I asked what she usually did for patrons. She said she was a practitioner of abuse. I asked what that meant and she tried to strike me, but I dodged the blow.

I asked if she could teach Morte to be more abusive. She said she didn't know, it seemed pretty foul-mouthed already. Morte piped in, saying HE! That's HE seems pretty foul-mouthed and insulted Kimasxi some more.

She came right back at him and the two lit into each other with barbed and blistering tongues. I waited for them to wind down. Eventually a strange silence settled over them as they eyed each other hatefully. Then the tiefling admitted to Morte that he wasn't bad, really.

Morte said better than you? Eh? Eh? She said don't push it. Morte said he wouldn't. He said he would admit he might have learned a thing or two. Good thinking, chief.

I said sure thing. She turned to me and said was that it? So WE traded insults. Eventually she gave in and said fine, whatever.

The only useful information I got from her was on Ravel.

The next room was vacant, but in the drawers Annah found some two-score coppers and yet another handkerchief.

Kesai-Serris

The next room up belonged to a voluptuous woman with a thick mane of hair and crimson eyes, like rubies with fires lit behind them. I said hello.

Her voice was deep and sensuous. She greeted me asked what she could do for me. Morte suggested that anything would be fine with him. He had enough libido for a dozen berks. (Thanks, chief!) She laughed heartily, revealing canines long enough to be fangs.

I asked what she usually did for patrons. She said she talked about dreams, often erotic, but not always. She offered to trade dreams, but said I must go first.

We flirted a bit and then I told her what little I remembered of my dreams. They disturbed her, but she would not tell me why.

I asked what she was and it seemed that she had been Plane touched, like Annah. We talked of a few other things.

When the conversation turned to Ravel she became upset again and said she knew nothing. I asked if she was sure, that she seemed upset. She said of course she was sure and don't ask her again.

In a dresser in her room Annah found a score of coppers.

Marissa

The room was dark. I could barely see a shapely form. She turned to me, but I could see nothing of her face. I bade her greetings.

She answered in a voice like steel being drawn across stone, saying come to speak with Marissa, had I? Rude of me to enter a darkened room and go behind her partition. I could hear a sound, like the whispering of a breeze or the hissing of serpents. Morte observed that this was a creepy chit.

I gave my apologies and said I wasn't sure if someone was there. She said but it would seem there was someone in this room. I said I had some questions.

We had an involved conversation about why she was in the dark and hidden. Turned out she must have been some sort of Medusa.

[Perusing the path about her appearance leads to a quest for her crimson veil that would let her stone a Lim-Lim. Personally, I find the idea repugnant.]

We found a few coppers and a silver earring in her room.

Then next room was vacant, but Annah found two gold earrings, a silver bracelet and two-score coppers in a room with a horned bed.

Ecco

In the next room she found 100 coppers in a big dresser.

We left the chambers just as a striking young woman returned. I said hello. She nodded and smiled. I said that I had some questions. She nodded again. I asked who she was. She smiled and curtsied, but did not respond. I asked if she could speak. She shook her head no. Morte said he loved her already.

I asked if she could write or pantomime. She shook her head no again. I asked why she couldn't communicate. She sighed softly and nodded.

Her eyes flashed and she smiled when I asked about Ravel. I asked what she knew of her. She just looked at me.

Nenny Nine-Eyes

In this room was a petite, attractive young woman smiling blissfully and humming to herself. I said greetings. She said well-met good sir. I'm Nenny. And how are you this fine d--? She stopped as she noticed my scars and placed a hand over her mouth, exclaiming you're hurt all over!

Morte put in with a mocking tone: Powers above, chief, she's right. I never noticed before!

We spoke further about my old and new wounds and then we spoke of other matters. She knew something of Ecco, the silent prostitute. She said that Dolora might know what had happened.

I had to talk her into telling me about the Crimson Veil. She didn't want to say anything that wasn't nice. I said it wasn't bad to point out a thief. She said, but she didn't know if she was a thief. I suggested she try and say something not nice about the woman. She said all right and then said she disliked her very much. She paused and then asked if that was convincing.

I said it wasn't, really. I suggested she practice on me. She said she could try and called me a big, mean, nasty brute and asked how that was. I said it was better, now hit me.

She looked shocked. She said she couldn't, she musn't. I said do it lightly, if she had to, and remember that I'm a mean, nasty, brute. I deserve it. A small penance for so many crimes.

She slapped me; I barely felt it. She looked horrified and said she was sorry. I told her not to break character. I said she should show me what she had; just let it all out.

Then she told me off about going out all night and asked what the kids would think. I said kids?

She became furious and asked if I had forgotten our children. I said to calm down and let go of the anger. (5000)

I asked about the Veil again and she said that she saw Kimasxi sneaking out of Marissa's room one night.

Vivian

I saw a tall, elegant woman walking down the hall; she wore an exotic perfume that called to me. I said hello. She looked at me with disdain and said her name was Vivian.

I asked what she was doing here, she said she was a student, but at the moment she was looking for something. She asked if I had smelled it. I asked about the smell. She said she had a particular scent that seemed to have gone wandering.

I said that she smelled quite nice right now. She smiled at me and thanked me for my compliment, but this particular aroma was nothing compared to her personal scent.

I asked how a scent could go wandering. She said the ladies here were jealous at times and had been known to take her various perfumes for themselves. This time, though, someone had absconded with her own, personal scent. One she had worked on, perfected, and now it was gone.

I asked how she would know it if she found it. She said I would know it by smell. Quite striking, especially to men. I offered to help her. She asked if I was certain; she did not wish to impose.

I said it was no imposition. I was pleased to help such a lovely woman as herself. Annah mumbled something unkind about piking and idjit-stick.

Vivian smiled at me and said I was too kind.

The room just counterclockwise from Nenny's had almost 300 coppers in a big dresser and a copper earring in a smaller chest.

Juliette

Annah found a gold ring in a small chest in Juliette's room. Juliette was staring off into space, looking quite miserable. I said hello.

She glanced at me briefly and told me to leave her be. I asked what was wrong. She said only that she spent her days gazing into the face of mediocrity, seeing if anything can erase its dreadful, tedious passage.

I asked if her life was so tedious. She said it was. I said that perhaps I could make it less boarding for her. She said no, but it was kind of me to offer. She said she was already with a man and loved him dearly. It was just that she wished something more of their liaison.

I asked what the relationship was lacking then?

She said it went too smoothly. Everyone was happy: their parents, their friends, and their siblings. It was not right to have such a trouble-free courtship.

I said I didn't know about that. She said did I not? Had I ever had such a courtship? I said I could not remember any that I'd had. The remnants of the ones I'd encountered suggested that I might have had some problems.

She said it was just that all of her friends had such interesting relationships, fraught with turmoil, feuding families, poison, mad siblings and irate fathers with large swords. She had a lover whose family loved her and whom the world loved. A great source of annoyance.

Morte floated close to me and whispered that he felt sorry for her lover. He didn't know how bad he had it. A chit like this was nothing but trouble.

I said that was unwise, she should relish what she had. She said she wished to experience troubles, though.

I asked what she had in mind to spice things up. She said she was not sure. An element of danger or jealousy. Something intense.

I suggested she make up some fake love letters from a hidden affair. She said that was an excellent notion, but he knew her handwriting. Would I write some?

I said it was not my sort of thing, but I could find her some, remembering the ones I'd found in Yves' quarters. She wanted me to give them to her love, Montague, and suggested I try Scofflaw Pen at the print shop.

Armoire

In the last room, next to the entrance, I found Finam's book. Searching the armoire its handles suddenly yanked out of my grasp as the drawers slammed shut. A disdainful hmpf issued from within.

I said hello. It said hello indeed and asked if I was after a lady's frilly undergarments.

I asked if it talked. It said yes. I asked who it was. It said its name was Luis and asked who I was.

I said never mind that; what was he doing here? He said that if I must know he was being an armoire. I asked why he was being one in this brothel?

He said he became an armoire because he wanted to be one. It was not for some perverted purpose; it was to soak in the experience of what it means to be an armoire.

I asked if all the women knew about this. He said yes they did and they wholeheartedly approve of ... well, not with their entire hearts, exactly. And while they have not spoken of their approval in his presence, since they are not

exactly aware that he was an armoire, he would not want them to know that he was anything but and so had not inquired upon the matter. Nothing like the pot calling the kettle ...

I asked other questions of other matters. Then I returned to the women's knowledge of his true nature. I said I would need something to keep me silent. He thought that was outrageous, but told me to open the third drawer. As I reached in he slammed it shut. I only barely extracted my fingers in time.

He seemed to find this most amusing. I had a different view. I said I would tell them right now. He said he would pop out before someone came to investigate my claims. I said that maybe I would just use him for kindling, then.

He said I would do nothing of the sort. One cannot commit violence within the Brothel. I'd be cast out. And if not, he assured me that his command of the Art was most impressive. Disgusted, I took my leave.

Yves the Tale-Chaser

I went to her and asked about the several conundrums I'd uncovered. She told me the tale of Marissa.

Kimasxi Adder-Tongue

I asked he if her sneaking out of Marissa's chambers had anything to do with her missing veil. She became enraged and asked who told me that. She said I could search her room if I'd like. Though she said if she caught me sniffing her britches ...

I said why would anyone ever do that?

She said it beat her, but someone had nicked more than a few pair of them, though.

Finam's Home

Finam

Since we had found his book we went to return it to him. When we entered he asked if we'd found the book. I asked if the one I had located was it. **(25000)**

He said yes it was and took it from me. Then he handed me his father's notes and shoved me out the door.

Lower Ward

Using the Rubikon we journeyed to the Lower Ward to get the false love letters and to give my samples to Nihl Xander

Great Foundry

Nihl Xander

I handed the vial over to him, but he told me he would also need a birdcage, which he thought might be had in the Siege Tower, of all places. Hmmm ... I wonder if Xander and Mebbeth are related?

Siege Tower

Coaxmetal

We went into the tower once more to have a chat with Coaxmetal. I asked him for a birdcage. Odd, but he had one already made. He said that the Dream Builder had come to him an age ago and said that his durance in the prison of this city would be near an end when the cage left his possession.

I asked if I could have it.

“YES. TAKE THIS CAGE AND LAY WASTE TO THOSE WHO CREATE SUCH CONFINES.” That’s what I like about old Coax; he’s such a kind, caring individual. I thanked him and left

Print Shop

[I should say that if you picked the dresser in Yves’ room you can use the love letter you find there for Montague and save yourself the coppers and nuisance of seeing Scofflaw.]

Scofflaw Penn

I asked the irritable fellow to print a love letter. He said it would cost a hundred because I looked desperate. I asked for a discount. He said how about 75? I said fine, I’ll take it.

Great Foundry

Nihl Xander

I gave him the birdcage. He said he needed just one more item. Apparently neither he nor Mebbeth had ever heard of shopping lists. He needed a pillow that has lain inside a coffin. I said I’d get it.

Coffin Maker

Hamrys

I asked about a pillow. He nattered on about how wonderful his work was. Now THIS berk I would have been glad to kill. I said I just needed a pillow

He said he needed 50 coppers for the basic boards ... yada, yada, yada, all about the construction of a coffin. I said again that I just needed a pillow.

Oh yes; now I was getting through. He went on and on about coffin construction. I was about ready to put him IN one when he paused for breath and I said, once more, I just need a pillow.

He nodded at me and went on and on about how he built the blasted coffins. I asked if he was listening to me? I just wanted a PILLOW!

Oh, sweet Lady! On and on and on. Perhaps I should kill him and take up building coffins. I certainly knew enough. Then he started on about the handles. I said if he didn't shut up and give me a pillow I was going to hit him ... Hard.

Well, the light finally dawned in that barmy face. He said pardon? All that talking must have made him deaf. I said I needed a coffin pillow. That's all. He looked relieved and smiled. He said he thought I needed an entire coffin. Well, if you never stop to listen ... He said he was out of stock. He said he didn't know when he'd have them again, since the warehouse was closed. I should have throttled him then and there, but I said I'd get the pillow.

Warehouse

Vault of the Ninth World

I told him I wanted a pillow for Hamrys. He gave me one. I wanted to hit him, too. I was beginning to understand why one of my former selves went mad.

Great Foundry

Nihl Xander

I gave him the pillow and told him to get on with it. He said anytime I was ready for the dream key, just give the word. I said give me the key. He paused, as if collecting his thoughts and told me to close my eyes and hold out my hands. He said I had to feel this key before I saw it or it wouldn't function. I did as he said.

(16000)

I felt a slight touch, and then it grew until Nihl said I could open my eyes. I was looking at a black feather. He said I should use that key on the leftmost door of the Foundry. I said all that work for a feather? He said it was the final stage. I told him to go back to work with my thanks.

Dream Builder

I found myself in a room standing under a hangman's noose. A gravelly voice cackled out asking if I dream again. My body felt light as if the winds could blow me where they would.

I next was floating through a maze of twisted plants that tore at me. Creatures of nightmare pulled themselves from the ground and ripped at my flesh. I blacked out.

I was ... Elsewhere. In front of me was a tower of skulls that babbled at me incomprehensibly. I turned behind, hearing a noise, and saw a host of fiends like those in the ruby box rushing at me. Then ... Blackness again ...

I awoke in the maze once more and I knew I had killed all of them. There were many bodies, some human, some not. I heard the voice once more. It said that I had killed these and so many more that she had lost count of them all. I knew who it was ... Ravel. But I was mute and could not reply. She said come to her in her maze and dream with her. Shuddering, I shook myself awake.

Clerk's Ward

Civic Festhall

We went to the Festhall to deliver the love letters.

Mertwyn the Headless

Since we were there, we gave Mertwyn his head. (8000) He thanked me and he fumbled in his pockets for a reward. At last, he gave me several handfuls of coppers.

We then chatted about how he'd ended up this way.

Montague

I told him that I needed to speak to him about Juliette. I told him I had overheard her speaking at the Brothel and that she was having an affair. He said I spoke falsely and he would have proof. I said I'd also found these letters and handed them over.

He looked at them and was aghast. He said he would move on to another love and let this suitor have her.

[OK, this is ONE time I wanted a choice in Planescape and didn't get it. The ONLY thing you can do is tell the fellow the letters are fake. Personally, I would have been much better satisfied if I could have left him believing they were true. She certainly was a shallow trollop and didn't deserve him. But ... we aren't given that choice. However, my faith in the crew at Black Isle was restored when I saw my later options.]

I told him this was all a ruse. ... He asked what I was talking about. I said she was trying to trick him into being more passionate. (5000) Now if he could only trick her into being more intelligent ...

He asked why she did not simply say something. I said I didn't think it occurred to her. He asked what should be done. I said I thought turnabout was fair play.

Morte had a great deal of advice to offer. For a skull, he certainly seemed to know his way around women. Morte ended by telling Montague to ignore her;

leave her wondering, and she'd be clawing all over to discover what the matter was. Right, chief?

I said yes; she'll think something's wrong and for once, Montague would be playing the game rather than being the target. Montague liked the sound of that. I wished him good luck and took my leave. (5000)

[Any of the fellows in the Festhall that walk about will wander all over the place. You may have to do an extensive search to find them. For example, I finally found Merriman in the hallway just north of the training rooms. Well away from where he starts in the main hall.]

Merriman

I saw someone that fit the description Dolora had given me. He looked sour and cantankerous. He said he may be Merriman, but was not merry. He told me to leave. I said that Dolora had wanted me to speak to him.

He asked what about. I said she said that he was her first love and that so long as he held the keys to her heart she'd never be free to love another.

He said she was surprised, that perhaps living under Mistress Grace's tutelage did what he couldn't: develop her feelings. In any case, he would not just give the keys to me.

I asked if those were literally the keys to her heart. He said that they were, that she was a construct. She was without emotion or character. He'd brought her to the Brothel and set her so that she couldn't leave, in the hopes that the constant contact would develop her own personality. The keys are the tools used to set her. She wanted them because she feels that they are limiting her personal growth now, he suspected.

I asked why he didn't return them to her. He said because he's a cruel and bitter old man who sees he can get something out of me. I asked what he wanted. He said he wanted to forget. He'd lived 150 years and had seen all the sensory stones and was too weak to go out and seek new experiences. He wanted a way to forget so that he could start over.

I said do I just wallop him in the back of the head or what? He said no, he needed something, an item or concoction that would allow him to forget. Like a draught of the river Styx. I said I would return if I found something.

Splinter

We went to splinter so we could go to the private sensoriums. I thought that chocolate demon would be just the thing for the old wizard.

Quell

I told him I'd brought him some imported chocolate as a gift. His demeanor changed in an instant. He said it was very kind of me and could he see. I said actually, no.

He was flabbergasted and said WHAT? I said I didn't think he deserved it; he'd been so rude. He spluttered, and then said he had been nothing of the sort. I said that in any case, he wasn't getting it until he'd apologized. Quell asked if he could see it, first. I gave him a peek. He was most impressed and started to reach for the quasit.

I said oh, no. Apology. Now. He scrunched his face up, biting his lip, and shook his fists silently. Finally he stopped, brushed off his clothes and exhaled. He

then said very well and he apologized. I noted that one of his hands was behind his back. Morte saw it too and said he had his fingers crossed.

Quell told Morte to be silent and then started insulting him before remembering whose quasit it was. He then presented both hands for inspection. I said all right, here. (8000)

I asked him who he was and he told me in his usual impolite tones. I reminded him of the candy and then asked again. This time I asked him to train me. I had already talked to Dak'kon about studying the Art again so when Quell asked if I was a mage I said yes.

Then he wanted my spell book. I let him look at it. He was indignant at the state of my spell book. I asked why it mattered and he went on about how powerful spells should be recorded in velum with exotic inks. Eventually he offered to sell me some spells. He had a good stock and some I'd never seen before.

I also asked him about Ravel. He didn't want to talk about her, but I said that I needed him to tell me.

He told me her story. Who and what she was and how she came to Sigil, that she kept herself alive with shadow-magic. I asked what shadow-magic was. He was uneasy, but he told me they were the magics of illusion, shadows, residues of dead things.

I asked how I might find her. He asked what I could possibly want with such an evil creature. I said she knew something of my past. He doubted that she'd help me. I said I'd just hope that she was alive and well and would help me.

He swore and said I should not be more of a fool than I had to be. I said still, I must seek her out. He asked what if she was dead? I asked what he thought I

should do? He said it was the first brilliant question I'd asked. He said I should give up the idea of entering her maze and chatting with her.

I asked if he could tell me how to get to her maze. He said I was a lunatic. He said she would make me dead, if she wasn't. I said that I understood, but could he tell me how to reach her or not?

He went quiet. After a moment he fished around in his tunic for a mint and ate it. He asked if I was serious. I said yes. He said all mazes had portals. He said he did not know the location or even the form of the portal, but he was told the key was a piece of Ravel.

I asked how I could get a piece of Ravel if she was mazed. He said I would have to make do. If I wanted to go pestering someone go to the Brothel. One of the ladies there was bound to be able to help. I thanked him.

Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts

We went back to talk to those we had helped.

Nenny Nine-Eyes

She was the first one I bumped into. I told her that Kimasxi told me someone had been taking things from her room, too. She said the once she saw a man sneaking out of Kimasxi's room and she watched the front doors all day, but he never left. Weird, huh?

I smiled thinking of the trouble I could cause Luis. I said yes, it was.

Luis the Armoire

I told him what Nenny had said to me and said that I thought it was him. He was indignant and began to expostulate upon the various indignities I'd caused him, but as he did so his drawers opened and shut. Just for a moment I thought I saw a bundle of crimson cloth.

I waited for an opportunity to grab it. Luis kept going on and on, but I never saw an opportunity. I tried to snap my hand in while the door was open. I succeeded in yanking the cloth from the armoire. As I tucked it away I noticed it was perfumed with an exotic and most pleasing fragrance.

He was furious and demanded that I give it back immediately. He said that was an exceedingly personal garment and they would not appreciate my fondling their private things. I said but it was all right for him, a wooden pervert? He said he wasn't doing anything so criminal. He was merely soaking in sensations necessary to his growth as an individual. I said of course and left him.

Vivian

I went to her convinced that I had found her scent on the Crimson Veil. I told her that I'd found it on the veil. **(25000)** Her eyes lit up, muttered a few words over it and returned it to me. She shook out her hair and I was surrounded by the most intensely exotic scent I'd ever had the pleasure of smelling. I said that smelled great.

Smooth, real smooth, aren't I? She said it did, didn't it? And since I'd done a favor for her, she would do one for me. She asked me to lean closer. I approached her. As I moved closer she took my hand and turning it over took a single cautious sniff of my wrist. She wrinkled her nose and said she would remove the smell from me.

She muttered something over me and I felt a tingling spread over my skin. My malodorous reek lessened substantially. She asked how was that? I thanked her and went my way. (**Charisma +1**)

Marissa

I told her I'd brought back her veil. (**25000**) She took it from me and put it on. Two points of red light appeared before me as she opened her eyes. She said if that was what I looked like maybe she was better off with her eyes shut. I said she should watch that forked tongue of hers. She said don't get her started.

Curiosity Shop

I thought another visit to the shop was in order to see if any of our new tasks could be solved by a purchase there. I bought the Elixir of Horrific Separation and the Ale stein.

Advocate's House

Advocate

I'd seen this imposing structure several times as we crisscrossed the Ward and decided to drop in. The large building was all one room inside dominated by a huge crystal fish tank where frozen fish swam no more. Wandering about this room was a man, looking small and alone. I felt that I knew him or had known him. I gave him greetings and asked if he could answer a few questions.

Instead of asking for myself I paused and asked if he was all right. He said of late he had been beset by troubles. I asked if they were anything I could help with. He said no, there was little that could be done, though he thanked me.

I said that perhaps talking about his troubles would help ease his mind. He said he did not wish to burden me. He lost his daughter not long ago and there was also the fire.

I asked him to tell me about his daughter. He said his Deionarra had passed away ...

I asked what she was like. He said she was young and had joined the Sensates. She had also met someone there and followed him on a journey and died. He had not even been able to recover her body.

We talked a long time about his daughter. It seemed to help him. I told him that I believed I was the man who had gone on this journey with his daughter. I also told him that I did not remember, that I had a condition where I forgot myself from time to time. He said it must have left deep scars and I said I agreed.

He asked my word that if my memory returned and I discovered what happened to his daughter I should return to him so that his mind may at last be at piece. I vowed that I would do that. He then asked me to leave him.

I came back in a moment and told him of the Sensate stone and its memory of her. His eyes lit with hope for the first time since I had been there. He said I must tell him which one. I said that if he was not a Sensate, he could not gain access. He said he must find a way, that perhaps they would make an exception for her father.

I said that if he wished I could speak to someone. I said I was certain they would make an exception in his case. He said that if I did he would be most grateful. I said I would see what could be done.

I asked who he was. He said he was Iannis and asked if I was looking for him. I said I didn't know and asked what this place was. He said he was an advocate and these were his offices. If I didn't seek council I should best be elsewhere.

I asked what an advocate was. Morte put in that this meant he was a lawyer. Iannis listed the services he provided and asked if I needed help in any of these matters. I asked about legacies. He said they were contracts that delivered upon the death of a client.

I said I believed he had a legacy for me. He asked if I remembered the legacy in question. I told him what the number was. He looked surprised when I told him the number from the mad incarnation.

He said that was extremely old; was I certain? He hoped that wasn't one of the ones that was burned. I asked about the burned ones. He said it was vandalism. I asked if he could tell me anything else about the fire. He said no, but it was very localized.

I asked if they located the person responsible. He said no. I asked what was burned. He said a number of old legacies and keepsakes of his.

Going back to my legacy I asked how old it was. He said several decades, at least. I asked if he could check and see if it still existed. He said it would take a moment and I said I would wait.

He came back in a few moments and said that it had been unharmed by the fire. I asked if I could collect on it since I was the beneficiary. (8000) He showed me where to sign, then handed me all the items, one of which was a receipt for the Foundry. He gave me directions to the Foundry.

I asked him about Deionarra's legacy and gave him the number: 687-KS. His eyes widened in shock. He said it was his daughter's legacy and asked how I knew her.

I said that I was hoping the legacy could answer that. He asked who was I that his daughter would have left a legacy for me. I said it was possible that I knew her once and had forgotten her. He stared intently at me and said I did seem familiar. I asked if he knew who I was. He said no, he did not.

I said that, perhaps if he got the legacy it might answer some questions for us both. He said to hold for a moment and he would return. I said I would wait. **(8000, 8000)** He said all the articles were there. He started to hand them to me and asked if he could read them.

I thought for a moment, then said of course and gave them back. He studied them. There was a long silence, and then he looked up at me. He said I ... meant very much to his daughter. She was willing to give up her life for me. I said I believed that was the case. He handed them back to me and thanked me for my kindness.

I said I mourned the loss of her daughter and hoped her words gave him some comfort. And perhaps this was now true. I felt that in this new set of lives something was different than before ...

As I read the letter she left with her legacy I felt strange ... I reached the end of the letter and noticed that something wet had run down my face ... She had honored my faithlessness with a belief so strong it cost her her life. I felt old and tired. As we left for the Apothecary I slipped on the ring she meant for me and resolved to seek her at the Mortuary again, now that I knew the truth. I could at least be faithful now.

Art Gallery

We went straight to the statue and I used the forge hammer, which I'd had to go back and buy from the Lower Ward Market to break off a piece. (4000) Then I used the salve and he came to uttering the curse. (4000) There was nothing I could do ... Well, I could die, which I did. Painfully. As I left consciousness I heard Morte exclaim that he'd learned some new taunts ... OOOOH what a hangover ... Is there a healer in the audience?

Apothecary

After I came to we went back to the Clerk's Ward and made our way to the Apothecary.

Pestle Kilnn

I asked if he wanted to try the Elixir of Horrific Separation. He nodded yes. I gave it to him. (6000) He took the bottle in his hands and placed it beneath the counter. He said that they'd make something from this that would fix them up and then give us some healing potions as a reward. I said farewell.

Pestle

After a little bit Pestle came back, now separate from Kilnn. I told him I was hoping to get some healing potions. He rattled on about the ingredients he needed. I told him my wounds healed very quickly. He said that my blood might do and asked for a sample. I gave him some of mine. He went away for a bit and came back with a number of Clot Charms for me.

Kilnn

He didn't have much to say and told me to speak to Pestle if I wanted to buy something.

Aelwyn

Walking past the bar on my way to see Dolora's maker we noticed a striking woman standing near the bar dressed in chartreuse. I said hello and she, avoiding eye contact with me, said that she, Aelwyn returned my greetings.

I asked if she was looking for someone. She nodded yes and said Nemelle was her name, a friend of hers. She worried for her in this place and wondered why she hadn't come to meet her yet. I said I could help her find her friend.

She asked if I would do that and as she looked at me with those golden eyes I felt overcome with a sense of home and joyous gratitude. Seeing me tense up she covered her mouth and averted her eyes again and the feelings faded to nothing. She thanked me.

I asked what had happened. She said she knew nothing of what I spoke. I said very well, what did Nemelle look like. She said Nemelle looked like her, but with raven hair and eyes of bright violet. I said I would tell Nemelle she was waiting for her.

Nemelle

At the other bar on the west side of the Ward I saw a woman much like Aelwyn, who also appeared to be looking for someone. As she turned to face me I was struck by her speech, like music made by tiny crystal bells.

Morte was impressed. Annah snorted and they got into it again, like two children.

I asked if she was the Nemelle that knew the command word for the Decanter of Endless Water I'd been carting around. She appeared to whisper the word in my ear. Though I did not hear her speak a sound, I found that I knew the word.

I also told her that Aelwyn was looking for her. She smiled and I was happy. I told her that Aelwyn was at the other café, to the east. She thanked me, and then offered a reward. I said no; that was all right.

She made a hushing gesture and drew me close, kissing me ... Or that is what she said and I felt it so and waited. **(8000, max hit points +3 permanently)** I tried to ask her questions, but eventually could not even speak to her. She left to meet her friend.

Drunken Mage

At the bar itself was a mage well into his cups. I asked him if something was wrong. He said that he had lost his apprenticeship. He'd been too drunk and botched his mentor's experiment. He said that drink ruined everything.

I asked why he didn't stop drinking. He said he could not. He wanted to, but could not. I told him he should see out Unfulfilled-Desire in the Festhall. **(10000)** His eyes brightened and he said he would go speak to her now. He handed me the ale stein.

[So, actually, you don't have to buy the Love Letters OR the Ale Stein if you do these two quests.]

Able Ponder-Thought

I saw an older, bookish man at the bar and said hello. He turned and spotted Morte, exclaiming would you look at that? A floating skull!

Morte turned and looked behind him saying where, where?

Able gasped and swore by the unjust laws of Tueny the Merciless. I asked who?

Then he covered his mouth, seeing Annah and begged her pardon for being vulgar. Annah said she cared not what he said unless he was talking about her.

Feeling left out, I tried to get his attention.

He turned back to Morte and remarked on all Morte's abilities. I said He act- and was interrupted. He said turned to me as a confidant and said that this was truly one of the reasons that the Planes shall never become dull. Just when you think you've seen everything the Planes show you yet another corner to peer around.

I said that actually talking, floating skulls were quite common, right up there with self-resurrecting amnesiacs scouring Sigil for their lost identities. He continued to ignore me, looking at Morte instead. He said to Morte I say, skull—

Morte gasped and said look behind you, another floating skull! I let Morte enjoy himself. After all, this berk wouldn't give me the time of day.

Able turned in shock to look for the "other" skull, saying where, where? Morte said right where he was pointing. Able said he could not see it. Morte, in tones of mock exasperation said Able just missed it. A whole parade of them. Able harumphed and said he sensed Morte also possessed a peculiar degree of mockery.

Actually, Morte had a doctorate in mockery. He showed me one time. Morte said he referred to it as keen insights into human nature. I tried again to get his attention.

At last Able noticed me. He went into his unjust laws routine again and then stopped himself. He asked if I was all right. I looked hurt. I said I was.

Annah said it hurt to look at me. I said that was very amusing, but I had some questions.

We talked about many aspects of his life, the Ward, Sigil and many other topics. He had a wealth of information and I was sorry that I had not seen him when I first entered the Clerk's Ward. What he said about the Lady was particularly interesting and more than I had heard from all of the other sources I had encountered put together.

Smoldering Corpse

Since I now had the command word for the decanter I went to see Ignus again, since this would be on the way to the Mortuary.

Adahn

A man with large eyes and thin frame walked up to me. He looked relieved to see me. I said hello. He said about time, friend. He'd thought he might be there all day waiting for me. I asked if I knew him.

He said why yes, at least, he thought. He said he was Adahn and we were friends. I asked where he was from. He was surprised and became confused.

He said well, not from around here. He didn't know where he was from nor where he was going.

I asked if he knew who I was. He said I was an old friend, wasn't I? I said yes, yes I am and that I had some questions for him. He said he had some for me, too, but couldn't remember them.

I said it had been interesting and started to take my leave. He stopped me and said he had something for me, at least, he thought so. I asked what it was. He said he wasn't sure and searched his pockets and sleeves.

I suggested that he check his left sleeve again. **(250)** He said really? He pulled back his sleeve and this time I saw a package tied to his wrist. He said it was for me. A thanks of sorts. It was a ring.

I asked if there wasn't some money to go with this. **(500)** He said yes, yes there was and handed me five-score coppers. I asked him about that enchanted item he wanted to give me. **(1000)** He was puzzled for a moment, then smiled and said why yes, there was, wasn't there? He pulled forth a long, slender dagger and gave it to me. I thanked him. As I looked up from my gift to thank him again I saw he was gone.

That is how I gained Adahn's Ring and Adahn's Dagger.

Ignus

I used the Decanter of Endless Water, pouring it over the grill. **(5000)** A small stream of water flowed from the decanter and touched the flames of the grill. There was a violent hissing and rush of steam. Then the decanter lunged out of my hands and shattered onto the grill.

I watched as billows of steam issued from the grill, spilling over me, forcing me to turn away. There was much screaming and a sound of great burning, as if a thousand cities were on fire. I covered my ears to block out the sound.

As I did so I saw that my ears were bleeding from the sound. I drew my hands back and saw them covered with melted flesh. I tried to leave the bar.

I turned and was about to go when all went silent. I looked back and the creature above the grill stared at me, its eyes flickering. It said it knew me.

He was terrible to look at, his voice a horrible roaring of flame. I called his name. He said he had slept long in dreams of flames. He was now mine 'til death came for us both. I said we shall see.

After he joined my party we spoke further. I asked how he got that way and he told me that we are all that way, that we all have sparks within us that might be kindled. When I said that I had some other questions for him he roared that he wanted no more talk and questions. I said that I wished to speak of flames and of burning. **(1500)**

I had his interest there and he said he would listen. We talked of many things concerning flames. I told him I'd spoken to a storyteller in the Hive and he mentioned that someone taught him these things. **(6000)**

He said I had taught him, had always taught him. I said was he sure it was I? He said yes, it was the only reason he obeyed me. He said the student had not forgotten the master. I said that it must have been long ago when he learned the Art, was he absolutely sure? He said yes. The face had changed, but many lessons I taught him.

I asked if my face had changed, how could he know. He said that inside all things the spark was the same.

I asked if he could remember anything about me. He hissed and then his features flickered. I thought it was the flames, but it wasn't ... it was a memory. I surrendered to the memory.

I was staring into a fire within a vaulted room. Faintly from the darkness behind me I could hear the rasp of someone breathing. I said step into the light. A frail youth stepped into the edges of the firelight. He was nervous; I could hear it in his voice. He asked forgiveness for the intrusion, calling me master.

I said he had already intruded, suppliant. He said he dreamed of flames again last night. He reminded me that I had said they were to come to me if -- I said it was a dream, nothing more.

He did not move and slowly he displayed his hands. The flesh around his fingers were blackened and burned. I asked how they came to be burned. He said he woke and his hands were as ash. He said he dreamed he soared above the earth and the ground and sky were as fire and the world was so bright that it hurt to look at it. And when he awoke his hands were burned as if he had held a flame.

I said he lied, that he had come to me with a story and now he was in danger of angering me. He said no, upon his life, he did not lie. I said he burned himself with a candle or thrust his hands into one of the pyres in the Vault of Currents.

He was silent and his face clenched in anger. He said he did not lie, it was the dream the burned him as I had said might happen. They were my words and he came to repeat them to me and tell me they were true. He held up my hands and I grabbed them.

Before he could react, my hand, huge in comparison, lashed out, crushing his burned hands. The boy screamed. I snarled and hurled him to the ground in front of the fireplace and his knees cracked when they struck the flagstones.

I told him to look into the flames. Through tears of pain he looked into the fireplace. I said was that what he wished to hold? Was it the shaping of flames that stirred his heart? Know that flames burn. If you would learn their power you must suffer their touch.

He was still silent, mesmerized. He was not listening to me and I felt fury wash over me. I said if that was what consumed him enough to intrude upon my meditations, then I would teach him of the shaping of flames.

My hand clamped onto the boy's wrist. He howled as I dragged him closer to the fireplace, and then thrust his hands into the coals. There was a crackling, hissing of burned flesh and his screams ...

I said to learn he must suffer. He must allow himself to be burned by the power of that which he wielded. Know its torment and he would know how to use it against his enemies. **(10000)**

My vision cleared, the memory vanished like smoke. He said he had not forgotten the lesson.

I told him I was sorry for what I had done. I could not tell if he heard me or in hearing, comprehended.

I told him that I had spoken with a storyteller in the Hive and he had mentioned that someone had taught Ignus these things, did he know who? **(10000)** He

said that I had always taught him. I asked if he was sure. He said it was the only reason he obeyed me.

I tried to break off the conversation, but he insisted on speaking of flames. I asked if he'd ever felt a building burning. The flames licking the edges of the timbers, blackening the wood beneath ...

As I spoke, the crackling of the flames around his frame ebbed as if the flames were listening to my words. When I finished, he hissed softly and the flames in his eyes dimmed as if he was lost in a memory. I said we would speak again and to stay calm in the mean time.

After talking to Dak'kon and taking up the study of the Art again I talked to Ignus to see what I might learn from my student. I asked him if he could teach me any of his powers. He said that in suffering he learned. I said I was willing to suffer for such knowledge. I knew from the crawling sensation in my scalp that I would suffer permanent damage for what I was about to learn.

I said again I was willing to suffer. Ignus said that though pieces of himself had burned away he could still teach much. I said that I wished to learn. He said that where flames once burned one may send them again. And before I could react one of his claws lashed out and clutched my finger. **(Max hitpoints -1, 6000)**

I asked him what he had done. He said, teachings. To learn, one must suffer. I went on to learn more. **(Max hitpoints -3, 12000)** This time I lost a hand. I told him I wanted it back, but he ignored me.

I wished to learn more, but he refused to burn more pieces off of himself or me so I offered him my intestines. **(24000)**

[As it turns out, now is not the time to visit Deionarra. There were no new conversation options.]

Lower Ward

Great Foundry

I went to see what my former self had stored for me there. Nadilin was quite curious about where I had gotten the receipt and I told him I'd left it for myself, but I got busy. (40000) After giving it to Dak'kon to identify the item turned out to be an Unfolding Portal. Unfortunately, I won't be able to use it until I get the key.

Clerk's Ward

Art and Curio Gallery

We went here to see if the Frost-Ale Mug would capture one of the Tears and it did.

Civic Festhall

Splinter

I spoke to Splinter on behalf of Iannis. He asked for what reason. I told him of the stone that had his daughter's experiences. He said they would allow it.

Merriman

I told him to take the mug, that it held a sliver of ice from the River Styx. He drank it and bore a startled expression. I called his name. (12000) He looked at

me in confusion, and then down at a note he must have written to himself. He gave me the key and went off to see Splinter.

Iannis

I told him they had agreed to let him view the stone. **(8000)** He was delighted.

Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts

Dolora

I gave her the keys to her heart. **(30000)** I then talked to her about her nature and about Ecco. From what she said I was not sure how I could help Ecco, unless the Fiend's Tongue could perform some magic.

Ecco

I had to speak to her about who she was and how she'd lost her voice. I asked if it was stolen and she said yes. I vowed I would find a way to return her ability to speak. I then walked away for a moment to get the Fiend's Tongue from Morte and went back to give it to her. She looked at me skeptically, but I told her that it should restore her voice to her.

She took the bottle from me and placed the briny thing in her mouth. Then her eyes widened and I saw a burst of reddish light from between her lips. I waited for a response.

She opened her mouth and said what a joy to speak again, but then the tongue's origin showed itself as she cursed me most foully. Morte said yikes. Ecco

yelped and covered her mouth with both hands, eyes wide with panic. I said it must be the Fiend's Tongue.

I said that I thought the Deva's Tears from the Curiosity Shop might help. She gave me a promissory note for 1000 copper and I took that to the shop.

Curiosity Shop

I gave Vrischika the note in exchange for the Deva's Tears.

Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts

Ecco

I gave her the tears. **(30000)** She was most grateful and I thanked her. I then asked her about Ravel. She told me Ravel had children. I said she did? She said that one of them is here: Kesai-Serris.

Kesai-Serris

I asked her if she was Ravel's daughter. She asked me where I'd heard such a thing. I told her that Ecco had told me. She said she thought she'd know if that wicked hag was her mother. I asked who her mother was, then. She said she didn't know. Her father had raised her, but did she look like a night hag to me?

I said well, there was the skin and the eyes and maybe the teeth, too. She said she was no longer in the mood to talk.

Kimaxi Adder-Tongue

I asked her about Kesai-Serris. She said that as far as she knew Kesai was Ravel's daughter. When I told her Kesai denied it she said it wasn't any of my business.

I then went to the other students of the Brothel to see which one could help me prove the truth of Kesai's heritage.

Juliette

She asked me if I'd talked to Montague yet. I said that he seemed disinterested. I said that I recalled him saying he was bored with things in any case. **(10000)** She was shocked and said that it would appear that her relationship had the troubles she so desired and she missed them in her melancholy. Whatever works, I suppose.

I also talked to her about Kesai and she told me to talk to Kimasxi, that they were half-sisters.

Kimasxi Adder-Tongue

I told her I'd heard she was Kesai's half-sister. She said yes, she was related to her. Same father, different mothers. What was my point?

I said I was hoping she could help me find out if Kesai was really Ravel's daughter. She frowned at me and said that normally she'd be loathe to help me like this, but she thought it would upset that flirting, preening doxy good and well. She said I should tell Kesai to ask her father. He was a powerful cambion so she ought to be able to call him right then and there.

I asked what a cambion was. She said yes, she said cambion. I said I was asking what one was. She said a half-fiend, sort of like me. I said better that

than half her. She said I wished I were half-Kimasxi, even if I had a goat's bum on my shoulders it'd be better than that scarred up face of mine.

Kesai-Serris

I told her I'd talked to Kimasxi and what she had said. She said she loathed Kimasxi and asked why I would even believe what she said. I told her that Kimasxi had said that she would deny it and might not know it, but that it was true. She said that Kesai could ask her father.

She stared at me silently and then said to give her a moment. She turned from me and began to mutter softly. I strained to overhear what she was saying. She was apparently "summoning?" her father with some incantation. I continued to listen. It seemed she'd asked her father this same question many times. As she finished I leaned back and pretended I had heard nothing.

She said she did not want to believe that wicked hag might have been her mother. But she did not want to be the inheritor of the evil Ravel had caused. I asked her to tell me what she knew of Ravel.

Kesai told me that Ravel would pose impossible riddles to people, riddles only she could answer. She would devour the person if they answered incorrectly. I told her to go on. She said Ravel's magic was said to be beyond anything most had ever seen. I waited for her to continue. She said Ravel was a mistress of all the Dark Arts. She hounded a Guvner that dared quote Sigil law to her with shadows that devoured him all but his tongue, his fingers and the flesh of his face.

I told her to go on. She said that Ravel could change her shape like water and would use it to destroy some for amusement and steal knowledge from others. I

waited for her to continue. In the end she threatened to open the Cage and let the fury of the Planes come rolling in.

I told her to go on. She said she did not know if Ravel was dead, but she knew now that she was her mother. I tried to comfort her. She fell into my arms, shuddering as if she were sobbing. Then she pushed herself away and thanked me. I said that I hated to ask her this just now, but I needed a piece of her.

I told her that tat portal key to Ravel's maze was a piece of her and Kesai was of her blood. She asked if I intended to see her out and asked what I would need of her. I said her blood, most likely. Only a drop or two. She asked if I had a way to carry it. I said I didn't. She said there must be a handkerchief around the Brothel I could use.

I went to our stash in the Lower Ward to pick up a handkerchief and returned.

Kesai-Serris

I told her I had the handkerchief. **(40000)** She wished me luck, saying that I would be putting myself in grave danger. I thanked her and bid farewell.

Under Sigil

I thought that with our new companion and our greater experience it might now be time to investigate Under Sigil. We made our way down the stairs in the southwest corner of the Ward.

We emerged into a large, irregularly-shaped chamber that had a number of shelves along the northern wall. In them we found an Adder's Tear and some bandages.

Moving towards an open coffin in the center of the next area three Trelons sprang at us. They must be something off one of the Lower Planes, having two huge arm-talons and a massive, evil-looking mouth. I put one down before the rest of my companions could reach me and we swiftly dealt with the others. They had modest loot and the coffin held a green-steel dagger.

In two coffins to the south we found a Heart Charm, 30 coppers and a gold bracelet.

The room meandered west and we reached the end of that section, but found nothing more, though we searched the four coffins with the crimson symbol on them. We turned south to see what was there.

The passage dead-ended so we went back to the entrance and turned south. We met a host of Larval Worms. I had Morte taunt one of them. Morte also cast Skull Mob for good measure.

They took a good deal of killing before they died, but we did away with all four of them. I was the only one to receive significant injury. They had no loot at all. We then wandered southeast and came to a door. As we went through the door a Somhein charged us. It died with the first blow I struck. It had no loot, either.

That room rambled on into nothing so we went back west to explore the other branches. Moving into the northwesterly corridor we passed more of those coffins with the strange crimson symbol and were met by five more worms. They died like the rest. We also passed by a series of archways that seemed to be only decorative.

We came to a fork where the passage split in two, going off at a Y. I decided to head back to the southernmost passage and see where that went to keep our heads on straight.

It branched also and we took the path that led south and west. It turned out that the two passages met again. There were several worms in the northern one, so we killed them.

The merged passages turned north and so did we. To this point we had explored the entire southern half of Under Sigil. The merged passages dead-ended to the northwest, so we moved a little east to take the other fork of the Y mentioned earlier.

We immediately ran into another Trelon that died easily. This was a short passage that met a T-junction. We took the northwest branch and saw five worms and two more Trelons at the same time they saw us. I turned to Dak'kon and Ignus to cast spells while the rest of us closed choosing to kill the Larval Worms first.

As we battled two more Trelon appeared. We had slain all the Trelons and all but the last of the worms when another Trelon arrived. We were all sorely injured, but managed to slay these last two creatures.

This large irregular room had exits to the northwest and northeast, besides the entrance we had used. In the middle of the room was a relatively fresh corpse on which we found a Heart Charm and some two-score coppers.

There was a door to the north leading to the Clerk's Ward and a door to the west. The room to the west held nothing. We went into the Modron Cube and rested, then re-entered Under Sigil through the north entrance we had just found. Moving south we turned left at the first new passage.

There was a door to the north and then the passage turned south. The door to the north had been sealed and refused to open. Moving south we met seven Trelon and Dak'kon tried out his new Ball Lightning spell. Most impressive.

A Larval Worm joined the fray and Morte, Annah and Dak'kon's morale broke. I was able to call them back eventually, but the fight was much more difficult. I was near death twice, but used some Blood Charms. None of the others bore a scratch.

A little past the battle was the next passage to the east and we saw more of the Trelons. After the battle we found ourselves in a large room with a central pillar. To the south was an open coffin and to the east were several shelves. In the coffin was a Crimson Sphere earring. On the shelves were a magnifying lens, a Blood Charm and two-score coppers.

Clerk's Ward

We went back to the Clerk's Ward to tidy up a few things.

Civic Festhall

Qui-Sai

I talked to Qui-Sai about who he was and what he did here. He said the he meditates and trains others. I asked if he could train me. He gave me a piece of his fingernail and told me to break it. When I did he "ate" it and said I was acceptable.

He asked why I sought such training. I said to defend myself. He said then there is no need for melee. I asked what he meant. He said that there are many

ways to defend oneself. One may steal an opponent's weapon. I said that the battle must still be fought.

He said that one might hide. I said that no thief has mastered stealth to such a degree. He nodded and said that mighty spells can smite many foes. I said that mages are like a flask of flaming oil, powerful, but once spent, nothing. **(10000)** He said he found me fit to teach and I should meet him in the training chamber. I said I would be there shortly.

I talked to him again in the warriors training room. He asked if I was here to train. I said yes. It turned out that I would need to advance in my skills a bit more before he could train me to be more proficient with my weapons.

[Here is yet another weapons proficiency coach for you.]

Mage-in-Training

While I was nearby I stopped in to see how the mages were doing. None of them seemed to be faring very well with their studies so I talked to a fellow standing in a group of three near the southwest corner of the room.

I asked him what this place was and he said it was where aspiring mages came to train and study. I asked where the trainer was. He said he didn't know where Lady Thorncombe had gone, but he would suggest trying the sensoriums.

[For some reason, most of the mages here are too busy to talk to you so that you can ask about their tutor. This fellow wasn't and there may be others. I did not talk to every one of them.]

Splinter

I asked him to take me to the sensoriums so I could talk to Lady Thorncombe.

Lady Thorncombe

I asked if she was Lady Thorncombe. She denied it. I said that I thought she was. She said if she was that woman, what of it? I said I had hoped to receive training in the magical arts. She said she would dash my hopes to pieces, then, for she no longer wished to teach magic.

I asked why not. She said it was no concern of mine. I said that it was because I sought to learn and she could teach. I asked what I could do to convince her to train me. She said she doubted that there was anything I could offer that she could not find on her own.

I asked about the sensory stones. She said when she first came to these halls she spent little time with them. Only now did she realize what she had been missing. I asked what was that?

She said one could spend lifetimes here among the stones. Mere words could not express their magnificence. I said that she sounded addicted. She snarled at me, saying that was nonsense, she could stop any time she wished. She asked why she should spend time teaching ungrateful magelings when she could remain among the stones living a hundred new lives each day?

I said that I didn't think the stones were meant for that and suggested that she seek sensations of her own to share. She said that what I thought mattered little to her and sent me away.

Clerk's Ward

Salabesh the Onyx

I went to see him and tell him of Lady Thorncombe. I told him I had more questions and asked him what he meant about being the future mage-tutor of the Festhall. He said it was a prestigious position. If only he could prove that he'd be a superior tutor.

I said he could always bring up the fact that she was addicted to sensory stones and didn't want to teach anymore. He said that was excellent.

Civic Festhall

Lady Thorncombe

I talked to Splinter and went to the public sensoriums again to have a word with Lady Thorncombe.

She stared at me for a moment, and then recognition dawned. She said she hoped I had not come there in an ill-fated attempt to drag her back tot he training chamber. I said I just wondered if she knew that Salabesh was happy to hear of her decision.

She said he could magic his way out of a mildewed sack. What decision was I speaking of? I said I was speaking of her decision to remain in the sensoriums and no longer train. She spluttered and said that she hadn't ... I said yes, Lady? She glared at me and said that if I saw Salabesh again tell him not to bother, she would return to training at once. I said farewell. **(12000)**

When I returned to the training rooms Lady Thorncombe was there. I said I was there to buy spells. She had a good selection of more powerful spells, including Power Word Blind, but nothing I hadn't seen before.

Southwest Hive

Reekwind

I thought to see how he was doing now that the curse was gone. He was back to normal and when I said I had some questions he stared at me, amazed and said it all just ... stopped.

I said I was glad to hear it. I told him Jumble didn't want to remove the curse, but I got it out of him. **(5000)** He thanked me and said he was sorry that he had nothing to give me save his good graces. He did say he would tell the story of my kindness to all who would listen.

I asked if he had any other stories he hadn't told me and he said he did, but wished to write them. I offered him my journal and thanked him.

Northeast Hive

Death-of-Names

I took care of something I should have done long ago. I talked to Death-of-Names and told him I wanted to bury a name: Es-Annon. **(500)** He scanned the monolith and the walls for the memorial area. I waited. He hunched down and chipped at a section of the wall, then came back to me and said buried.

Southwest Hive

Crier of Es-Annon

I told him that I had seen to Es-Annon being remembered and told him where it had been carved. **(500)** He said he would tell his fellow criers and thanked me. I said it was nothing and said farewell.

[Yes, I should have done this long ago, but I honestly thought that the darn coffin maker was the person I would get the stone from. I mean, for Pete's sake why do they tell you that you need a tombstone? Anyway, my apologies.]

[I should also say that the choice of the last party member is up to you. I only switch to FFG here because I can and Ignus had played out his experience bonuses.]

Clerk's Ward

Brothel of Slating Intellectual Lusts

Fall-From-Grace

I told her that I had spoken to nine of the students, but had not found a tenth. She said that was curious. I said I thought the last student was me. She asked what my thoughts were. I said that I had learned what it meant to aspire to be a Sensate and that it was better to go in search of experience rather than have it come to you. She said she would travel with me, if I still desired her company. I said that I did. **(20000)**

Once she had joined us we talked for some time about different matters. We talked about her name. I asked if it was her real name. She said perhaps, perhaps not. There are names that are given and names that are earned. I said that the name that is earned carried the greater weight. She asked why. I said that an earned name is not arbitrary. She said my point was well taken.

I asked why she was called Fall-From-Grace. She asked if it mattered and said it was an earned name. I said it mattered to me. She said she had fallen from her people, though some would say risen, but fall felt more right to her, if that made sense.

I said that it did. After all, fall carried with it an underlying sense of loss. She was silent briefly then said that perhaps that is why it felt as it did. I asked if she was sure she'd come to terms with it. (1000) She said she had thought so, yet in speaking to me she had realized some things. I said that if she wanted to talk about it let me know.

We talked about my companions and myself. I asked her about Morte. She said he was most peculiar. He behaves like a mimir, but he had a certain Baatorian smell about him. We talked about baatezu and the Baatorian smell.

Then I asked what she had said about a mirmir before. She told me what they are and I asked if Morte was one. She said she didn't think so. She said that he lacked the silvery metal they normally have and he seemed to have an attitude of his own.

I told her Morte I said I didn't think I believed him. She suggested that there might be some test to verify his authenticity, but if I valued him as a friend then I should accept what he'd told me.

Morte

I chose to ask Morte about being a mimir. He said he was one and that they're like a floating encyclopedia. I said that I thought mimirs were made of a silvery metal. He said maybe some are, but he wasn't.

I said I didn't think he was a mimir. He asked what was with the interrogation? And what did I know about them, anyway? I said I knew enough to think he was lying to me. First that bit about the missing line from my back saying not to trust him, then this. What was I supposed to think?

He said OK, he wasn't a mimir, but he knew a lot of stuff, so he might as well be one. I asked what he was, then. He said he was a floating skull who knows a lot. I asked about the aroma of Baator he carried. He asked what I would know about what Baator smelled like and then realized that I had been talking about him with Grace.

I said that she'd obviously touched on something and again asked about the smell. He said yeah, so he smells a little. I asked why he smelled that way. He said he was in the hells fore a while. I asked what he was doing there. (12000)

He said there was this pillar on Avernus, the first layer of Baator, called the Pillar of Skulls, but it was more like the pillar of heads. To hear some bashers tell it's supposedly made of the heads of berks, mostly sages and scholars who used their knowing to stretch the truth a little—enough that they might have killed someone by doing it. When he died he ended up there.

He thought that funny, I said it wasn't, really. He said yeah, I was right; it wasn't funny at all. And, thinking it over he might have led someone to get penned in the dead-book sooner than they should have. I asked if it was me. He said yes.

He couldn't say how he knew it, but he thought so, though he couldn't remember what happened.

I asked why he forgot. He said that was pretty much the way of things when you die. He figured he wasn't a sterling member of the community when he was a live, but who is? Nothing was worse than being honest all the time, though.

I said being sentenced to the hells sounded a lot worse. He said I was right. Again.

I asked how he escaped the Pillar. He said I'd helped him. When I showed up at the Pillar he pushed his way to the front. His obvious know-how and charm attracted my attention. So he cut a deal with me.

I said what sort of deal. As Morte spoke I felt the familiar creeping of a memory coming back. I could hear the howling and screaming of a tower of voices ALL of them begging to be freed. Morte's voice was faint, desperate, frightened and lost. In my memory I told him to speak.

The howling voices fell silent and I watched the tiny, red-lined skull turn its eyes up at me. He said he could help me. He knew what I sought. He said he'd tell me anything.

I told him to swear it. To swear that he would serve me until the end of my days or here he would remain. He swore. He begged. In the present I felt pity, but in the memory I told him I would free him with no emotion in my voice at all.

I reached into the Pillar and was bitten by teeth, mandibles and fangs. I locked my hands around the skull and ripped it free. I said it was done. As I stared at it I said I had freed him. Now his life and his death was mine. (12000)

As I came to Morte was still telling the tale. One much more complimentary to him. I asked what happened then. He said he didn't know he'd lose most of the Pillar's knowledge once he was out of it. He said I was pretty understanding. I asked about him losing that knowledge.

Once again memories returned. He was screaming in pain for someone to stop killing him. My hand lashed out over and over again as I said I would thrust him back in the Pillar and leave him to die there.

I told him that his suffering on the Pillar would be nothing to the torment I would make him suffer. I came back to hear Morte neatly tie this one up to suit him, also. I asked what did I want from the Pillar and how long ago had a freed him.

He said he didn't know how long—ages ago. As for what I wanted to know, once I pried him off the Pillar he couldn't remember. I asked why he didn't say something at the Mortuary.

He said because he never knew who I was going to be. Some of me have been stark, raving mad. One time I woke up with the idea that he was my skull and chased him around the Spire trying to shatter and devour him. Luckily a passing cart in the street crushed me. Another of me, feeling most lawful, tried to put him back in the Pillar.

I said so he'd stayed with me all this time? He said yes, he always kept his promises. I knew he was hiding something, his tone had changed. I said seriously why was he still traveling with me?

He said it was because he promised, all right? What else could it be? I said I didn't know, but he didn't need to stick around after I freed him. He said of course not, but he—his tone of voice struck a chord in me and I knew why he'd

remained with me. I said he felt guilty because he let me to my death so long ago. Isn't that it?

He said come on, chief. Him? Feel guilty? I said I thought that was it. When I came to free him from the fate he deserved he couldn't help but try and help me. And when he could have left after I freed him he didn't because he felt indebted.

Morte was silent, looking at me. Maybe, he said. At first he didn't know what the feeling was. For the first couple hundred years he thought it was the side effect of some enchantment that bound him to me. But then he realized it was more than that. Something deeper. He just felt drawn, connected to me. That perhaps he was responsible for bringing me to this state.

He said he didn't see the consequences of all the lying and cheating he'd done until he saw me for the first time when he was trapped on the Pillar. He knew that I was the one he'd betrayed. I thanked him for coming clean. **(Morte's strength, dexterity and constitution +2, 12000)**

He said don't thank him. He looked as if he had healed in some way. He should thank me. He felt like he just had a Plane moved off his shoulders.

We went back to the Tailor's Shop to pick up a frock or two for Annah and Grace. Since we had the money I bought all 4 dresses. Annah made various complaints, but I could see she was pleased.

Ravel's Maze

At last it was time to see if we could find our way into Ravel's Maze. I used the folding portal and stepped through into the same green, contorted terrain I had seen in the dream machine.

We walked to the right and were met by three Trigits, which sprang out of the ground to attack. They died easily. This section went only a short way before ending so we backtracked and went north. We met more Trigits and killed them. They did not appear to have any loot.

This whole area was filled with Trigits but otherwise was relatively featureless, except for a few traps. From where we started taking the second right and then immediately going left and north took us to Ravel's Black-Barbed Garden, where we met Ravel.

I studied her for a moment; she was busy with her garden and paid me no heed. I called her name. **(90000)** As she looked at me with her dull red eyes I felt a crawling sensation through my body, like worms moving through a corpse.

I greeted her and she gave a grotesque smile. She said she feared I'd forgotten poor, lonely Ravel. I asked how I could forget her. I had missed her, but she hid herself in a place that was difficult for me to reach.

She said that she had scattered clues like caltrops over the land and feared I had forgotten her. I assured her that I'd done no such thing and had returned at last.

She said yes, but what has returned. She reached out to touch me and I let her, though my stomach turned over at the prospect. I could feel the worms again. I reached out to touch her, mirroring her movements. It felt familiar. I closed my eyes and surrendered to the memory.

When my eyes opened it felt as if all the color had bled out of the trees and the maze. Ravel's eyes were still closed, but as I watched they opened and she smiled. I felt words rising to my lips, echoing something I'd said in the past, in a different place, on another Plane ...

In my memory and the present I said it was known that she was the greatest of the Gray Sisters and I had traveled far to reach her. She nodded, but slowly, as in a dream. She asked why I'd traveled so far. My need must be great, but I'd brought nothing that would interest her.

I said that my need was great. My currency was a challenge, perhaps an impossible challenge. One that might even be beyond her abilities. As I spoke/remembered I felt that manipulation, the twists designed to pull her strings. She said there was nothing that was beyond her.

I said that Death waits at the end of life for all men. I need it to wait for me no longer. Could she do this?

The vision cleared and color returned. My hand was still cupping Ravel's cheek. I withdrew my hand slowly and called her name. She said I was a sad, broken half-thing, all a-pieces.

I asked what she meant. She said I possessed a body, but not a body of knowledge. Many tales did my skin tell. I asked what tales these were. She said my scars and tattoos shouted that here was a man in confrontation with the world. Such tales as would shrivel even a hag's ears.

I asked her to tell me these tales, as I would know them. There were several and I listened to them all. She then turned on my companions and said words that disturbed them greatly. Last, she turned to me and talked of our first meeting. She said I had come to her with an impossibility to solve.

I asked her what it was. She didn't seem to hear, but spoke still from the past. She talked of my passion. Passion to be freed, but when threed the fire guttered

out. She said that mayhaps I should sit and beg and she might give me another scrap of knowing.

Said that if begging would bring me answers, then I would beg her to tell me what she knew, that I needed her help to remember. She said now a gentled heart? Had life softened me? One could hope.

I said I had many questions I wished to ask her. She said but I had already asked too many. The time for her questions was now. I said very well, ask your questions.

She said that it was her law that if I did not answer her questions no more of mine would she answer. I said that her rules were fair and she should ask her questions.

She said she would know why I traveled here with my companions. I said that of course they knew. Would they not want to travel here to meet with her? She stared at me in silence, then her face split into a grin. She said precious man, I carried only words, but I was well armed indeed.

I said truly I only spoke truths. She asked if they traveled with me willingly. I said they chose to walk my path. She said chose was a dangerous word. Was it so? I said yes.

She turned her attention to Dak'kon and asked if it was a choice. His blade bled into a dead black, reflecting his eyes, then the blade split into jagged fangs.

I told her to leave him be. That I would answer her questions, not my companions.

She asked what of the cog-box, turning to Nordom. What did it know of choice?

Nordom started defining the word. It would seem he knew more than I gave him credit for. I told him to stop, that this was between Ravel and I.

She turned to Morte and clicked her tongue. She said she felt his fear. Coming here was not his choice. Morte said he didn't have anything better to do except go to one of the Lady's mazes and meet one of the vilest creatures ever to set foot in Sigil so he said sure, why not?

I told him to be quiet also. Morte, as always, paid no attention. Morte said be quiet? Like the hells he would. He said he thought we'd listened to this crone rattle her bone-box enough and now she had some pair of stones saying he hadn't got any skin! So what if I don't? Obviously, the fact that she had skin had done wonders for her looks. Did she think he liked being naked all the time?

I told him to cut it out, but she ignored me as well, turning to Grace. She said that for Grace to have refused to join would have left her not a Sensate. I told her that was enough.

But she turned to Annah. She said when you feel instead of think there was little room for choice. Annah said nothing. Her tail was motionless and her eyes looked dull.

Again I told Ravel that was enough and asked what other questions she had.

She asked what did I feel for those that had come with me. Did they matter to my heart? Or were they tools for my will?

I asked why she wanted to know such a thing. She said that is yet another question, but the answer would cost me nothing. Her answer was that she wished to know, no other reason.

I said truly that they mattered to me. She asked if that was true even for the gith.

I said that truly he was my ally. I knew him. He was my friend. She nodded, and then smiled again. I asked if that surprised her.

She asked about the skull. I said truly that I liked him and considered him my friend. She said curiouser and curiouser. She asked what else lurked in the dark places of my mind. I said that I hid nothing.

She turned to Grace and said here is the core of it. Did the Abyssal temptress rise above the merely carnal to me or is she something else in my eyes.

I looked at Grace, who was silent. She seemed to be studying Ravel intently, as if looking for weaknesses.

Ravel turned back to me and told me to speak. I said truly that I liked her and considered Grace to be a friend. I said I'd had enough of these games, but she turned to Annah, asking what was she to me.

I said truly I could fall in love with her. Ravel said so be it. Again I said I'd had enough, but she had more questions.

She asked why I waited so long to return to her. She said she grew lonely without me.

That's me, chick magnet. I said that the way to this place was difficult. Efforts had been made to insure that she had little company and many were the trials I was forced to undertake, yet I was glad to see her again.

She said my answers were soothing and had not been heard in such a time. No matter where my memories be, my charms remained. I said nay it was her charms that persisted. She said of charms, enchantments and beguilements ... all these she had mastered, yet there was much it seemed I could teach her.

I said perhaps. Had she another question? She said yes, the third and last. As she opened her mouth to speak it I was gripped with the terrible realization that this final question had murdered many others to whom it had been asked. I felt it welling up within me and asked it myself:

What can change the nature of a man?

She said she could see I had not forgotten. What was my answer?

I said love. She asked if that was my answer and be certain before I said. I said that it might not be her answer, but it was my answer.

She said that that was all she wished for. A simple answer and in the end, many were the men she had laid low while they sought her answer.

I asked if that was it. She said countless times had the question been asked and not once did the pathetic shells to come a-fore her answer with their answer, but always sought to creep inside her mind and find what she thought. There was no truth in that.

I said I did not believe her. I said that I didn't think they ever could have answered her true, even if it was true to them. She became silent and watched me warily.

I said that she never cared about any answer other than mine, did she? Yet still she asked the question, knowing that no matter what the answer they gave they would die.

She said of course my answer was the only one she sought, for I was the only reason she asked the question. Did I think she cared for them? Did I think she cared even a fraction of the amount for them that she cared for me?

I said I was through answering her questions. Now she would answer mine. She said of course.

I asked why she made me immortal. She said it was what I wanted. It was my solution. I asked why. She said she didn't know. I asked if she had any idea why I'd asked her to do it. She said that death was a thing I needed to dodge. An easy thing to say, but to do was not. I said yet ...

She said that lead was not easily changed to gold, but it is possible. I said so she pulled it off?

She said the gulf between man and unman was great. I traveled the distance. She provided the means, but I crossed on my own. She said that mortals were too flawed to be made to last. They must be dragged kicking and screaming into an unhealthy new mold.

I said so the ritual was flawed? She said that shortcuts had to be made and they could break the mold. Force something into a shape it was not meant to be and it breaks. She thought I was of stronger stuff, but I had been broken.

I said but I was immortal, surely that was a success?

She said I had survived long, but I had become the prey of life. The body was but a hut for the soul, but now no one dwelt in my hut. I asked what went wrong with the ritual.

She said the ritual gave me what I wanted, but ... I said but?

She said the costs were great. The casting of shadows, the quiet, violent deaths of the mind and the pain-taking emptiness. These things were dangerous in such a fragile vessel, no matter how strong a mortal man.

I asked, in turn, about the casting of Shadows, the violent death of the mind and the pain-taking emptiness.

Then we talked of the flaws of the ritual and I asked to have my mortality back. She said that what was undone cannot be done. I asked why not. She said she could not give such a thing to me for she had nothing to give. She never possessed my mortality or me.

Again I asked why not. This caused a discussion among Grace, Annah and Ravel. At last I said I wanted to know if she didn't have my mortality, where was it. She said she didn't know.

I asked if she knew someone who did know where it was. She said clever, clever, clever I was. Yes, there was another who might know. I asked who.

Her eyes dimmed and her voice slowed. She said I must ask an angel, a diva. He lay within another cage, in another prison. Ask him my questions. Listen to his answers and use them as guides. I asked where I could find this angel.
(180000)

She said in leaving this prison to another cursed prison I would arrive.

I said I had other questions for her and asked about HER, Ravel, and we talked about her for a time. When we talked about what she was she asked me of the many things that were said about the gray ladies; what would one such as I call one such as her.

I said truly that I found her beautiful. Not, perhaps, to the eye, but her mind. She asked if I thought her ugly. I said she was not ugly. She said her shape was but water to her will. I started to ask what she meant when she ... melted into the perfect mirror of Fall-From-Grace. She said come to her. I said very well.

As I touched her lips I felt a sharp pinprick. I exclaimed that she'd bit me.

She said I had bit her so long ago. I felt that I would pay for this with Grace and Annah. I told her to resume her normal shape.

She twisted back into her original form. I asked what other shapes had she turned herself into.

She said so many things it was hard to pick them out, but I heard Mebbeth and Ei-Vene and Marta, so I asked her about them.

When we spoke of Mebbeth I asked her if she could teach me more of the Art. She said she was but a midwife. I said I didn't think so. I said I thought she had much more to teach me.

She asked why I wanted to learn the Art. I said as if in an echo that I might need it to solve the mystery of who I was. After a moment she nodded and said if I wanted to know, then listen. I listened ... **(Wisdom +1, 90000)**

She said something to me that I should not know, that no one should know and my mind closed around it.

As we spoke about Ei-Vene she reached out to me and I let her work on me. **(+3 hitpoints)**

When we spoke of Marta I stood there and let her take out my intestines. I'm not sure what I'll do with them.

I asked why she was imprisoned. She said she tried to help the Lady who did not take to it. She said she tried to set the Lady free. I told her to go on. She said that before she could finish she found herself here.

I asked why she tried to free the Lady of Pain. She said she resented anyone being imprisoned. I asked if she was trying to set me free so long ago when we met.

She said quite possibly. I asked if I was chained or caged somehow. She said yes and tightened her grip on her hair. I asked if she had any idea what held me.

She looked confused and said she had forgotten, mayhap a promise. Then there was a snap as she tore the hair from her head. **(90000)**

She said she would say no more. She did not know. She said to take her hair and leave the past where it lies.

We also spoke of the legends that claimed she was a powerful mage. I asked her to teach me some of the art. She said she would not be sharing. I said that I asked only that she teach me some of her ways- nothing more than a glimpse into the vast well of knowledge that she possessed.

She called me a flatterer, but said my words warmed her. She began humming and said to listen; the branches will speak of it. I closed my eyes and listened.
(90000)

A trembling passed through me as if dozens of barbed snakes were burrowing beneath my flesh. As the pain became unbearable I began humming the same tune Ravel did and the pain ebbed. I continued to hum.

She watched me and said such power it touches all that hear it. One day even the Planes might bend to my will. I said that I did not wish such a thing. Many would walk that path, but not I.

She nodded and nodded at my hand, which held a number of black-barbed seeds. She said I should use them as I will and to this she would grant an additional boon. Taking some of the seeds and a hair from her head she crushed the seeds, creating a necklace. I took the seeds and the barbed charm.

I thanked her for her information and said I had to leave now. She said I had not asked the most important question. I said I needed to know how to leave.

She said she knew the branchings of this place. Though there were no leaves here, one may take their leave when they wish it. I asked if she did know how to leave.

She told me and said to take heed that I had what I needed before I took that step. I asked which of the edges of the maze did I leave by. She said one of the edges knows, not she. The rememberings of which had failed her.

I said if she'd known how to leave all this time, why hadn't she. She said the answer lay not in the staying or leaving, but in the causes and reasons. I asked if she didn't want to leave.

She said it was a want, a once-want, but not a now-want.

I said she had done me a service and I thanked her. She said it was she who thanked me and wished to grant me a boon. I said I would gladly accept any gifts she wished to give.

She said I should listen to her and close my eyes. I did so. (**Wisdom +1, 90000**)

I felt a sharp, stabbing pain and opened my eye to see that she had one of my eyeballs impaled on a talon. I asked what she did. She said she had granted a boon, a piece of herself. She took a seed and my eyeball in one hand. There was a wet crunch.

I told her to give it back. She said of course and showed me an eyeball that looked untouched. Before I could react she stabbed it into my socket. I hope I forget this memory. Really I do. Erhhkkkk.

She said when I saw the Planes through that eye I would understand more than I once did. I thanked her and said farewell.

As I started to speak I felt a crawling in my skull. I said she wasn't going to let me leave, was she. She said that was a perceptive question, yet not the real question. The question was did I wish to leave her.

I said that she helped me when I came to her so long ago and had done so again. I would not forget what she had done, but now I must leave.

There was a shimmering in the air around Ravel and the sound of snapping tree limbs. I exclaimed ...

She said what did I know of knowing? She said I would stay here until the end of days never to leave and I would love her as I was meant, as I promised.

I said I would be poor company. She said she would not let me leave. I asked her not to do this, that I would return to visit.

She said I claimed I would so long ago, but I would not lie to her twice. I said she should calm herself, there was no need for this.

She said that I'd forgotten my place. I asked again that she not do this.

She moved off a space and conjured Trigits from the ground. I conjured some of my own and we fought. It was an unequal fight. I had Morte send her a mob of skulls and Dak'kon showed her his anger. We quickly slew all her Trigits, then her. **(32000)**

[I should say here that there is no way to avoid a fight with Ravel. She just isn't going to take your leaving well at all no matter what you say to her. Also, if you kill Ravel before killing the Trigits the program seems to get confused and end up hanging the game.]

As soon as she was dead many Greater Shadows sprang up and attacked us. In fact, everything attacked us. All the remaining Trigits and at least a dozen shadows. Eventually the killing was done. We sustained a few cuts and bruises, but otherwise nothing serious.

Eventually we found that there were three portals, one in each "corner" of the maze along the outer "ring" of paths except to the southeast. It turned out the portals in the southwest and northwest sent us to the real exit portal in the northeast.

While searching the area around Ravel's body after the battle, Nordom detected a portal under the overhanging branch to the south. It apparently responded to Ravel's hair. Using it, we went through into a secret area where some odd branches were still growing in one patch. Using one of the Black-Barbed Seeds I was able to make three branches grow. They twined themselves together and I took them with me and exited through another portal under the branch to the north. (10000)

Curst

We found ourselves in an odd desert fortress with inhabitants even uglier and stranger than we had met before.

Curst Guard

From talking to a guard I found the location of the head man and the reason the gates were locked. They were locked in fear of the plague.

Roberta

A middle-aged woman was wandering about apparently looking for someone near the blacksmith. I walked up and greeted her. She asked who I was and I told her I didn't remember my name.

She asked if I was a petitioner. I asked what a petitioner was. She thought for a moment and then said that petitioners were those who had died and had their bodies reform on the Plane that most closely reflects their beliefs in life.

I said possibly I am and asked how many times this can happen. She said it was her understanding that it happens but once. I said in any case I had no name to give her.

She offered me her hand. I took her hand, bowed and said well-met Lady Roberta.

Before speaking of matters in Curst I asked her if there was something amiss, for she seemed upset.

She said her husband, Carl Parfidor, was not where he told her he would be. This was not the first time he had lied to her and she was beginning to think he was with another woman. A harlot.

I asked why she would think that. She said he was quite a ladies' man before they wed. If the rumors she heard were true then she had a surprise for him.

I asked what surprise. She lifted her skirt exposing a sheathed dagger strapped to her leg. She said that finding this protruding from his back would constitute a surprise.

I asked if she intended to kill him. Her smile faded. She said she would if she could, but no, she and Carl were no longer ... intimate. She could never get close enough to deliver such a blow. Only one of his women could.

Traitor's Gate Tavern

Feeling a mighty thirst coming on we entered the local tavern. It was as dingy and dismal on the inside as Curst was on the outside.

Nabat

I saw a pleasant-faced man at a table along the right wall of the tavern and went to greet him. He gave me a friendly hi. We spoke for a bit about the tavern and its patrons, but he didn't have much to say for now. He did hint at more tales later.

Tainted Barse

I went to speak to the bartender. He looked as if he hadn't had much sleep of late. He welcomed me to his bar. I asked what was wrong.

He said that his daughter got herself kidnapped by slavers and now the place was going to fall behind on its bills and he might lose the tavern. He looked at me again and said if I wanted to know about the Deva that if I helped him he could help me.

I asked what he knew about the Deva. He said he knew that the Deva was hidden beneath the prison and Barse knew how to get there. I asked what I had to do for that. He said to talk to Marquez. He said that Marquez held the first part of the key that'd put me on the path of the Deva. He said there were five parts to the key, but it isn't a physical key. I said I'd do it.

Marquez

I went to the large fellow in Harmonium armor that Barse had pointed out and said hello. He said he would tell me where to find Barse's daughter. When I'd killed the slavers I should report back to Marquez and he'd help me find the Deva. He would even teach me weapons. I agreed.

He told me they could be found to the east in Inner Curst. I said farewell.

Chek'ka Plute

There was a large, formidable-looking fellow at the bar. I went up to talk to him. I asked what he was doing here. He said he was watching Barse. He'd heard that Barse had a tunnel here and he wanted to see him use it to see if it was true.

Kitla

In a raised section of the tavern, past a large, stuffed, sea creature I saw a striking woman who looked lost in thought. I greeted her.

She asked if I always talked to strangers. I said if I needed to ask them questions I did. She said she was busy and insisted on being left alone.

Berrog

Walking upstairs we saw a small man pacing back and forth, hiding in the shadows of a decorative column. He pleaded for us not to hurt him and said they'd kill him if they found him.

I asked who would kill him. He said the guards were after him. He said he thought he said something he shouldn't.

I asked who he was. He gave his name and said he was a thief, but he preferred to call himself an engineer. He said he only used his skills for good ends.

I asked what he was doing here. He said that he came to Curst because he'd heard that there was a Deva trapped here and he thought he could be of assistance.

I asked about Mount Celestia. He said that all things had their place there and all things were beautiful. He said he needed to get home. I suggested he go, then.

He said thanks, that I wouldn't see him again and left.

There were a few trinkets in the various tables and wardrobes on this floor, but in a locked room was a thug (quickly dealt with) and a set of magical punch daggers.

Blacksmith

Crumplepunch

I thought it wise to look and see what the smith might have for sale. He had a large selection of most potent weapons. After much examination I decided to forgo a purchase for now and come back after completing my new quest.

Small Dwelling

In a small hut next to the smithy Annah found a silver-headed hammer.

Inner Curst

In a trunk behind a cone-shaped hut to the left of the gate I found a perfume bottle amongst a collection of junk. The bottle would let me invoke Acid Storm.

An'izius

I saw a githyanki pacing deliberately. I could almost smell his rage. As I came up he snarled at me, asking what I wanted.

Dak'kon was wroth asking why we would help a githyanki. An'izius' eyes narrowed. He said that he had cast aside the hatred he bore Dak'kon's people. For this he had been exiled, but in his heart he had bested them. Could Dak'kon say the same?

I told them to cut it out so I could ask some questions. I was wasting my breath. No matter what I asked he insisted he had important matters of state to attend to and left.

Near the Warehouse were an immense number of boxes. Annah looked through many of them and found three bronze rings, a copper earring, a silver earring, two silver rings, a Greater Dustman Embalming Charm, a gold ring, a Serpent Ring and a Ring of the Traveler.

Warehouse

Inside the Warehouse were numerous barrels and crates. In one Annah found an earring, bracelet and ring all made of gold. She also struggled to drag off a gold ingot. In another barrel she found a piece of chalk.

Skatch

Just to the north of the warehouse I saw a crowd of Harmonium slavers. I walked up to their officer who immediately asked what I wanted. I said I was here to get Barse's daughter back. He said what would I do if he killed her, then drew his blade and attacked me.

There were six of them and it wasn't a very fair fight so they went down quickly. We were careful to keep the slavers near Barse's daughter busy dodging spells and blows. Instead of ganging up on one officer, we split our attack, each of us taking a different slaver. They carried little loot, a few coppers, a nice axe, a Blood Charm and two spells.

Jasilya

She thanked me several times and then left.

Curst

We went back to get the next piece of the puzzle from Marquez.

Traitor's Gate Tavern

Marquez

He asked if I were here about Jasilya and I said she was free and should be back here shortly. **(65000)** He gave me the first part of the key to get under Curst and told me to go talk to Kitla to get the second part of the key.

Kitla

She said that she had a use for me after all. I asked what I had to do.

She said that there were two men, Crumlepunch and Kester. They both owed her a lot of money. One of them owed the other as well, so they weren't paying her. She wanted the legacies they were arguing over so she could bargain with

them. Failing that, if I could get them to settle their problems or kill them she would give me the second part of the key. I said I would do it.

[Buy whatever you need from Crumplepunch before completing this quest if you decide to take this solution. Once you give the legacies to Kitla you can't buy from him. Also, you get 150k for doing it this way. If you work it out without the legacies in Crumplepunch's favor you get 132k experience, but then, you can still buy from him. He has a couple of relatively worthless magic weapons in the locked chest in his shop and will fight if you take them.]

Jasilya

By the reservation desk for the tavern I saw Jasilya. She thanked me again and asked what she could do for me. I said I was looking for a place to spend the night. She said I would have to talk to her father.

Tainted Barse

I went to see him about rooms. We rested to recover from the various nicks and cuts we got over the last few days.

Blacksmith

Crumplepunch

I told him I'd heard there was trouble between him and his brother. He asked if his brother was spreading stories against him. I said I was actually interested in clearing the matter up.

He told me the difficulty. His father had left them the smithy and distillery but now his brother was trying to cut him out of the distillery, which always made more. Crumple said he had a legacy to prove his claim. But he didn't trust anyone in the town to help him. I said I would need his legacy to look it over.

Inner Curst

Distillery

Kester

I told him his brother sent me and that he wanted a negotiation between them and their father. He said if I could get his brothers legacy from him and decide in his favor I'd get a nice reward. I said I would need his copy of the legacy to look over. He was suspicious for a moment then passed the document to me. I said farewell and went to see Kitla.

Curst

Traitor's Gate Tavern

Kitla

She asked if I had anything for her and I told her I had both of their legacies. She said give them to me and she'd give me the second part of the key. I said here you go. **(150000)** She tucked the legacies away and asked me if I was ready for the second part of the key. I said yes tell me. She said for the third part of the key I should talk to Nabat. She also offered mage training.

Nabat

He told me to see Kyse, the caretaker of the dump and prevent a gang of thugs from robbing him of a large quantity of gold Kyse kept hidden underneath his floorboards. I said all right and left.

Dump Caretaker/Kyse

We talked of several things and when I asked about the dump he told me of a secret entrance into the undercity.

Then I told him I'd heard he was having trouble with a group of thugs. He said Wernet was their leader and insisted that Kyse give him all of his money. Kyse had told him that his wealth lay solely in his heart and faith, but he thought Wernet did not believe him. Kyse told me where to find Wernet and asked me to convince him there was no gold. I said sure.

Inner Curst

Wernet

I found him over by the wagons as Kyse had directed me. He was a heavily scarred, burly thug. I told him that I'd come to talk to him about Kyse and he said to go back and tell him he to give it up or he'd be a dead man. So I left.

Curst

Dump Caretaker/Kyse

We got there just in time to prevent three thugs from killing Kyse. They died quickly and only had a Blood Charm and a stiletto. Kyse thanked me for saving his life and could receive healing from him anytime.

Traitor's Gate Tavern

Nabat

Nabat gave me the third part of the key and told me the next was with Dallan, another patron in the bar. Nabat also offered to teach me about thieving. (43750)

I asked why he wanted me to save the old man. He said they used to be his gang and they ran him out for stealing even though he was framed. Nabat planted the rumors about Kyse himself so that the gang would be killed or caught by the guards.

Dallan

I found him in the lounge near the kitchen. He knew I was looking for a key. I said that's right, what do I have to do for it. He said I should go talk to An'izius near the gate to Carceri about his political difficulties. I asked him if An'izius was a friend of his and was he looking for a particular outcome. He said he would trust to my discretion. I said very well, I would be back.

Inner Curst

An'izius

I told him a friend told me he was in need of help. He grew more intense, if that was possible, and asked me what I had heard. I said simply that he was having difficulties with a political enemy. He asked if I was going to help him. I said it depended on what he needed from me.

He said it was of a delicate nature. A rival required education. I said I would do it. He said I needed to humiliate Siabha who had been undercutting his position with the Burgher. He told me to tell the captain of the guard that she attempted to hire me to attack him. He said I could find her, if I desired, near the Administration building.

Siabha

I told her that An'izius had an interesting proposition. She guessed what it was and offered me double what he was paying. I said he sent his regards. She said I'm sure he did and I took my leave.

Guard Captain

I found him standing near the gate to outer Curst. I told him that one of the officials of this town had asked me to murder another. He asked who was planning what. I said that An'izius had asked me to frame Siabha who asked me to do the same to An'izius. (200000)

Curst

Traitor's Gate Tavern

Dallan

He was happy with my little turn around and gave me the next part of the key. He told me to see Dona Quisho for the final part of the key. (87500) I asked why he wanted the matter taken care of. He said well, because he was a power hungry mongrel and she a self-aggrandizing whore.

Dona Quisho

She told me there was a fiend locked up in town and she wanted him freed; I asked why. She said because it was hers. I asked how did I know it wouldn't go on a rampage. She said that didn't concern her, I should cut my own deal with the fiend. She just wanted him freed.

I asked what I had to do. She told me to find the grain silo and to use the scroll she'd given me.

Grain Silo

I went upstairs to the second level of the silo and stood inside the pentagram. I felt a great evil. I examined the scroll. (60000) A foul wind went through my head and heart and a fiend stood before me. He was huge, over fifteen feet and had four arms. He stared at me and I said hello.

I felt a voice speaking in my head. He gave me his name, Agril-Shanak and asked why I was here. I said that Dona Quisho had sent me to free him and asked what was in it for me if I did.

He said that his gratitude would know no bounds. I said that I needed something more concrete than words. His eyes drilled into me and then he said that he would grant me a magical weapon of great power: Heartgrinder.

I asked what it was. He said it was a weapon dear to him. Would I free him for it? I said yes if he would tell me how. He told me to break the pentagram and I did. He gave me the axe and then said out of gratitude he would not slay me, but know that if we ever met again I would rue the day. Then, he was gone.

Traitor's Gate Tavern

Dona Quisho

She asked where the fiend was. I said I was sure he'd be around shortly. She cackled as she left talking about her traps and plans. On her way out she gave me the last part of the key and a thousand coppers.

Tainted Barse

He told me it would be a one-way trip, but I said I was ready.

Curst Underground

In a moment we found ourselves under Curst in some dank dungeon.

[You can either go all the way through the quest of the five-part key or you can go down the rat-hole that Kyse talks of. Of course, you get a great deal of experience going through the whole key-thing.]

Two Trelon pounced on us as we were getting our bearings, but we slew them easily. Someone must have rung the dinner bell, for it seemed every Trelon in this fetid place came running. We killed them all.

The cavern we were in split as we walked west, forking northwest and southwest. We took the southwest passage. This section meandered on for a bit, and then there was an intersection with passages running northwest, west, south and southeast. We went southeast.

Voorsha

This section went southeast, then southwest. After the turning we saw a man in desert dress walking away from us. I ran to catch up to him and said my greetings.

The conversation became interesting when I asked what he was doing here. He seemed evasive, though he admitted to being a trader and said this was his storage area. I asked what he stored. He said that wasn't my concern.

I said I was just curious. He said he kept ale, mead ... other goods. I asked what he was so nervous about. He said nothing and asked if we could change the subject. I said no I thought he was up to something. He said he was bringing stuff in through alternate channels.

I said he was a smuggler. He said he was a bootlegger and asked how would I like to help him. I asked what kind of help. He said there was a gehreleth that was trying to kill him. I asked what a gehreleth was. He said it was just a creature intent to eat everything it saw.

I asked why he didn't deal with it himself. He said that he wasn't a warrior. I asked what I would get if I took care of it. He said he could use a partner and we'd split the profits down the middle. I said sure why not.

Beyond him in the passage were a number of crates and a cart. Searching we found 4 Blood Charms, a Blood Fly Charm, a Whispering Flask and scrolls of Ice Knife, Remove Curse and Hold Undead.

Following the windings of this cave we eventually found ourselves back at the intersection. We tried to go west, but our passage was blocked by rubble, so we turned northwest.

Ghrist

We found an odd creature with lots of fangs. Or rather, it found us. It approached and said that we might be tasty, though we looked tough. He was willing to engage in some conversation before dining and we talked of many things. It turned out he was looking for the Deva, too. The Deva was to be his main entrée at lunch. Oh yes, he was the gehreleth I was looking for.

Then I told him that Voorsha wanted him dead, which fazed him not at all. I asked if he was going to eat me. He said he would when I finished my questions. I asked why, since I meant him no harm. He said that I was in the wrong or right place at the wrong or right time, depending on how I looked at it.

I said I was hard to kill, but he could try if he wanted. Then I attacked the creature. He went down after only a few blows. **(14000)** He had a scroll of Horror on him, which I was happy to take. We then went back to find Voorsha.

Voorsha

I told him I'd killed the gehreleth. He looked surprised, but was remarkably unenthusiastic. I said he'd promised to make me his partner. He said yes, he did say that. I said that he didn't think I could kill the gehreleth, did he?

He stared at me a moment, then said no, he didn't. He was hoping the gehreleth would deal with me and save him the trouble. He said now he'd have to take care of me himself, drew a weapon and attacked. Foolish mortal. I defended myself.

I took him myself; he died with two blows. All he carried was a silver ring.

Monster Jug

I thought it time to see what was in the jug I had been carrying around. It turned out to be another gehreleth. He died too and had a few score copper on him.

Hermit

We moved north again from the same intersection. As we came to a turn to the west in the cavern I saw an aged dirty man. As he saw me his fingers began moving through arcane patterns. I waited to see what would happen.

He said I scared him half to death and these tunnels were no place for a casual spring walk. It turned out he was trying to free his god who was being held in Carceri. He let us rest to recover from our few nicks and cuts.

Coming to the end of the twisting cave, we found an enchanted golden ring in some sort of machine to the south. To the west was an exit.

We made our way all the way back to our first intersection where we entered and turned north.

There was a chamber on the left. As soon as we entered we found a nest of Trelon. Just to see how effective it was I cast Cloudkill. It killed two of them outright and the rest died quickly.

Moving north we found a cart in between two very odd chambers. The cart held almost four hundred coppers and a Ring of the Traveler. One chamber held ten Nupperibos while the other held ten Lemures.

Both groups fell easily to our spells and did not need to lay weapons on them.

After resting to recover our spells, we went back and explored the rest of the area. We went east past where the Nupperibos were and found that the passage curved back in on itself to the west.

Tek'elach

I saw three fiends and chose to address the one that looked the most senior, or should I say, grotesque. We spoke about a number of things and I always felt he reserved comment. That there was something hidden. Even when I asked about the Godmen's secret project. So we left by the exit we found and entered the prison.

Prison

At the entrance several Trelons greeted us. They died. We followed the passage as it went north. I encountered a number of guards. They gave a good account of themselves.

Choosing to go right at the first fork we found a cell, which unfortunately could not be opened without a special key. So we went back and took the left fork going west. We moved north through this area and encountered yet more guards. At the next intersection we turned north.

I eventually came to a large chamber housing that held a mining machine. In one of many barrels in the lower left of the room were an Adder's Tear, a scroll of Greater Embalming and five hundred coppers.

There was another barred door to the south of this room. It too required a key I did not possess. So we retraced our steps and went south at the intersection instead of north. In a barrel along the eastern wall we found ninety coppers, a scroll of Friends and a gold bracelet. At the end of this passage we found a barred door, but unlike the others, this one opened.

Trias

I saw a gaunt Deva held in chains. I told him Ravel told me to seek him. He said her name struck sparks in his memory but these chains were like the waters of the Styx, the longer they remain, the less he remembered her. He said should he be freed he could answer my questions.

I asked how he could be freed. He said an act of kindness and told me that I needed to fetch his sword. He said it was kept somewhere in this prison in a guarded chamber. He also said he knew the combination of the entrance which he then told me. He said free him and perhaps he could aid me in what I sought.

I asked what he knew about what I sought. He said I wore the marks of it upon my face and carried it within my heart. I said very well I would find his sword.

I tried the gate to the north and west to his cell first which proved to be correct. There were a host of guards one of whom carried a peculiar key made from a human finger bone.

We proceeded by layers. Layers of guards, that is. There were dozens in this part of the prison and they took much killing. We dug into our reserves of

healing charms and cast many spells at them. We passed through a second part of the ring of cells and saw Siabha once more.

Siabha

It turned out she had been imprisoned here and she was not pleased to see me. There were several smaller doors that Annah could not pick.

An'izius

He was no more pleased to see us than Siabha was. Imagine that.

Cassius

Eventually we came to the central chamber where a very corpulent being stood before a large platform. He said that he held the true essence of Trias sword and that I must defeat him to reach it.

I asked who he was. He told me his name and said that he was the greatest weapon of a dead Abyssal Lord. I asked if he was a weapon. He said he was the most effective weapon in the entire Abyss and could take the form of any creature's doom.

I asked why he left. He said his master sank into the heart of the Abyss while he was out slaying. None of his master's heirs could tame Cassius, so he left.

I asked if he could slay me and he said yes though it would be a dear fight. Did I wish him to slay me. I said I'd like him to try. He said to tell him that I had come for the blade and he would destroy me.

I said I'd come for the blade. He said that the sword powered the Prison of Curst. Removing it would free all the prisoners. He was charged with preventing this. Did I still wish the blade, I said yes.

He said I must choose between three contests: strength, wits or speed. I said I choose strength. He said should I win I may have the blade. Should I lose he will feast on my bones. I said very well.

It was a terrible struggle. Only by using a great number of charms was I able to best him. **(10000)** On his person I found Celestial Fire.

When I left Cassius' chamber the prisoners and guards were fighting everywhere. I weighed in on the prisoners side. Most of the prisoners died but a few made it.

We searched the cells thoroughly and found nothing.

Trias

I asked if this was his sword. He was shocked and after a moment asked if I would free him by striking a blow against the chain. Which I did. **(306250)** He thanked me for freeing him and asked what I would have of him. I said I had many questions. He asked if I sought power, wealth, souls to torment or wishes to be granted. I said I sought knowledge.

He said then speak your desire. I said my mortality had been stolen from me and I wished to reclaim it. He said there was one who might be able to help me. A fiend named Fhjull Forked-Tongue. He said the fiend was obliged to do charity.

I asked how do I reach him. He said there was a portal to the north of the prison. It's key is a broken chain link. I gave him my thanks and left.

We moved to the other large gate to the east that we were unable to penetrate earlier. It turned out to be a portal.

[There are consequences to taking Vhailor onto the party, so you may want to leave him behind. The first is that the character that is replaced by Vhailor is gone for good. You cannot get them back because you can never return to Curst Prison once you leave it. The second is that he will kill Trias and there is nothing you can do to stop that short of leaving him behind when you talk to Trias.]

Vhailor

Opening the portal also opened the gate. The cell was much larger than the others and held what I thought was a man, at first. As we drew closer I realized it was a suit of armor, which looked empty. But if it was empty, how did it stand ... ?

I walked closer and examined the armor and the very impressive axe the armor "held." It was all of an age ... an age long ago. I had no clue how the armor was supporting itself or the immense axe.

Something stirred within my mind and I called a name, Vhailor ...

I felt a memory come upon me. I relaxed and tried to bring it to the surface. (60000) As I stared at the armor the shadows began to take shape, becoming a powerful, ebony-skinned man. He seemed so familiar ... both the suit and the man.

I called for him to awaken. Brilliant red light flashed from the helm. I threw my hands up to shield my eyes. When I looked again two red coals burned where eyes should be. He said he had AWAKENED.

I asked who he was. He said he was Vhailor. I asked what he was. He said he was a Mercykiller. I asked how he served justice. He said that justice used Mercykillers as her eyes and will. When sentence was passed she lent them her strength.

I asked how. He said that the strength of justice depended on the harm the injustice had caused.

I said so then the greater the injustice, the greater the crime, the more strength justice lent him? He said that when the injustice was great enough, justice would lend him the strength needed to correct it ...

As he spoke I felt that familiar crawling of my scalp. I knew I'd heard those words before. He said know that for all who betrayed justice, he was their fate and fate carried an executioner's axe. I said that I see. He said no, I did not.

I asked how did he know when to dispense justice. He said that justice saw through his eyes. In seeing, he knew the guilty. I asked what he saw when he looked at another. He said that all he saw were judged.

I asked about each of my companions. Then I asked him to look at himself through justice's eyes. He resisted, at first, but I continued to press him. I asked if he was beyond justice. He said that nothing was beyond justice.

I said then he should look at himself. I asked what the eyes of justice saw when they looked at their servant. His eyes went black and there was silence for a

long time. As I was beginning to think that his eyes would not rekindle, the brilliant red flare flashed again.

I spoke his name. He said again that his actions spoke his heart. I asked what he saw, even though I felt it might be dangerous to do so. I asked the question again.

He was wroth, saying he was not found wanting. Where liars and betrayers of truth fostered lies, he would answer their lies with justice's blade. I said but what I'd asked was ... He interrupted me, asking who was I to question a servant of justice. He said he would now search my heart.

I started to say something, but felt his eyes upon me, tearing at my skin, blistering it and peeling it back, but then there was no pain. As his eyes burned into me I felt a memory return. I succumbed to it.

His eyes became brighter, then I was facing him, but where there had been hollow space there was now flesh. A MAN glared at me from beneath the helmet. His face was locked in fury. He had come for me.

I said he had found me and traveled a long way. He said that justice led him to me. He said he would see me brought before the courts and punished. If I denied it, then speak and he would judge me.

I said I did deny it and that he should judge me. Then I would judge him. He said I had no right to judge him.

I said yes I did, for I knew his heart, but I would not judge him now. I said that he must rest within this cage until the day I could set him free to walk the Planes once more.

As I spoke the word “cage” his eyes turned from me to the surrounding walls, the walls of the Curst prison cell where I found him, so long in the past. I said that I’d eluded him up to this point, why did he think I agreed to meet him here. Did he think I was surrendering?

I said this was the gate town of Curst that bordered the prison Plane of Carceri, where even gods were held prisoner. He turned back to me, but some of the fire was gone from his eyes. He said this was treachery.

I said that treachery ran through this place like veins and it was that treachery that lent me the strength for this enchantment. I said that I could leave this cell, but until I came for him, he could not.

He said that I went beyond denying myself justice, but I was denying his crusade. I said that I knew of his mission, but that would have to wait until I was done with my mission and this was the second time he had found me and attempted to judge me. I would not allow it to happen a third time.

He said nothing. My voice had the finality of death. I was pronouncing a terrible judgment on him, a judgment that carried no justice at all. I said I was immortal, but he was a strange one. Justice had touched him and it may be more powerful than what had sustained me. Still, he should take heart. I did not wish him dead. Perhaps I would have need of someone who had the power to kill me. So here he would remain until I came for him. (90000)

My vision blackened. When my eyes could see again it was the spectral Vhailor they regarded. I called his name.

He said I would be judged. I said very well. As his gaze burned into me I felt detached, as if I was stepping outside of my body. There was a whisper crawling

in my skull that said that no matter what he claimed to see, he would only see what I wished him to see. I was a closed book to him.

He asked if I had murdered another. Truly I said that I had. I said it was my hand, but not my mind. I told him that in one of my previous incarnations I had murdered a man named Fin Andlye.

He said that I had admitted the crime and the guilty would be punished. I pointed out that I had already been punished. He said he would hear of my punishment.

I said that every time I died I lost my memories. I had no sense of self, no sense of who I am or was and I bear thousands of scars in mind and body from wounds I could not remember. Death rejected me and I feared I would never be able to be at peace.

He stared at me and my vision faded into a drowning blackness. He said that I had been punished. He could see the mark of justice in my flesh. I said then ...

He said that there was much that could not be seen in me. He would watch me. I had been punished, but it would not save me from future punishments. I said very well then, we would consider this settled for the moment. I still had questions ...

I said truly that we could use his help. Would he join us? He asked if my heart sought justice or was my journey without purpose. I said that I sought knowledge of myself and if there was justice in the knowing of it, then I would find that, as well.

He looked at me with silent embers for a moment, and then said he would, but that my will was an inconstant thing. He would teach me of justice and the slaying of mercy. I said very well. (90000)

It troubled me, but I asked Grace to stay behind, knowing how much it had vexed Annah to have her in the party.

Outlands

We walked through the portal and were greeted by several Gronk; huge odd-looking beasts that appeared to be part frog, part warhog and all ugly. They died quick enough, though.

No sooner had they departed the Plane of the living than a host of Grilligs came calling. The Grillig were just as ugly, but much harder to kill. They hurt Vhailor gravely. As we explored the area we continued to encounter groups of both creatures.

We had been fighting in and around a large and intricate formation of rocks. During a pause in the fighting I realized it was, in fact, not stone at all, but the skeleton of some great animal or beast. The skeleton was huge. Its finger bones were longer than I was tall. Near the head Nordom detected a portal, so we searched the entire skeleton for anything unusual.

House of Fhjull

Fhjull Forked-Tongue

Entering the first portal we'd found we met Fhjull, whose house was filled with all the equipment of an apothecary. We talked a great deal, for I found it entertaining in a perverse way to compel the fellow to give me information.

At last I said that I had been told that he would know of my mortality, which had been stolen from me. He said that if he recalled correctly he had heard of such a case as mine. He asked if it made me immortal. I said yes.

He complained much at this, saying that mortals used to know their place and how much easier it would be if we just had a gathering and offered everyone across the Planes a contract.

I said be that as it may, he should tell me what he knew of my mortality. He said he recalled hearing about a place called the Fortress of Regrets. I asked how would I get there.

He smiled and said he was pleased to inform me that he did not know. He was much pleased by this and prattled on so about how glad he was to say those words ... Until I asked him if he knew someone who did. **(350000)**

He said crossly that he knew someone who might know. On Baator was a pillar of betrayers, liars and sages whose knowledge was considerable. I asked how I get there.

Morte put in his oar, saying that Baator was bad news and that even if there was a Pillar of Skulls we could probably find somebody else who knew how to reach it without going to one of the most dangerous Planes in the multiverse.

I asked why he didn't want to go there. He said it was dangerous, he'd already been there and it wasn't pretty. Was that all right? I said that we'd talk about this more later and told Fhjull that I had more questions.

When I asked for aid he said he had a few items and spells that were precious to him, but I should help myself. I did, liberally, picking up several spells and a number of unique items including Hatred's Gift, an axe Vhailor would certainly never use.

Outlands

Though we had found nothing else, save foul creatures in our first search of the skeleton, we searched again once we left Fhjuul. In the creature's chest Nordom discovered another portal. Girding ourselves, we stepped through ...

Baator

... Into Hell. Well, one of them, at least. Dry, red and full of fiends. A stream of Black and Red Abishai came towards us ... and died. Though they seemed to like me and after a few tumbles with the Red Abishai I wasn't feeling too well and my headache was back.

The further we went into hell the worse it got. We encountered more and more Red Abishai, and then a Cornugen. Walking down a trail to the west we came to a Green Abishai attacking a damsel. She turned out to be another Green Abishai. From the rocks a number of Lemures jumped us too.

In the southwest corner I saw a small crevice in the rocks. It looked like I might be able to squeeze through, but it didn't seem to go anywhere. The ground was littered with shards of obsidian. I noted this for later and went on to seek the entrance to the Pillar of Skulls.

Pillar of Skulls

To the far southeast we found the passage to the Pillar of Skulls. As we drew near, the cacophony of countless skulls all speaking at once was deafening. I got their attention.

Morte became very agitated and said he did not want to go near it. I told him to forget it; I was going to speak to it. Initially they ignored me and spoke only to Morte, insisting that he return. I said that he had not come back to them, but I had some questions.

Then they complained about Annah's smell, her musk. They said the scent would carry and attract Baatezu. Their Lord, Bel would be angry.

Then before I could ask questions another skull emerged from the mass. I saw it was Pharod. He wanted Annah to rescue him. Before anything could be done his head sank back into the Pillar's core.

Annah was staring fixedly at the Pillar, her fists were clenched and her tail was rigid. I said truly that I wished we could help him. She smirked, spat and turned away from rotting skulls saying no matter.

I asked if she loved Pharod. She turned on me, eyes blazing. She said he was her Da, but she hated him. He only saw in her a way to get more junk to line his vault. Then her voice lowered and she said but he was the only one ever to show her a scrap of kindness.

The skulls said enough and demanded to know my business with them. I said I had questions. They said I would have to render unto them a service for my answer. I asked how to reach the Fortress of Regrets.

They said they would answer that for a service and I asked what their demand was. They said they wanted the skull. Morte pleaded not to go back. They told Morte the decision was not his. They said if I were to return him they would be most well disposed towards such a gift.

I asked what other gifts they would accept. They said if I would tell them where the fiend Fhjull Forked-Tongue resided they would answer my question. I told them the true answer.

I asked for my answer. They said I already possessed the key and only needed the location of the portal. They said they knew not where the portal lay, but its key was regret.

I asked what they meant by regret. They said that I must have experienced regret to breach the Fortress. I said what of the portal. They said only three have known the way. The first was me, though I had forgotten. The second lay beyond the portal and would not emerge and the third ...

I asked, the third? They said the third one I had already met, but they would not help me. I must do battle with them. I asked who it was. They said I had met the liar and not for the first time. The liar knew but did not tell me.

I asked, Trias? They said oh yes. I asked why he would lie to me. They said the answer was not theirs to give, I must ask him.

I asked how he came to know of this. They said that Trias exchanged words with me once, long ago, when I knew the way. I spoke my heart and Trias, in the way of all great betrayers, listened well to build my trust.

I said that was all I wished to know and turned to leave. They told me to stop and insisted I give them Morte. I told them to forget it. They howled and bellowed an alarm and I left, running.

Baator

It was like kicking over an anthill. Fiends of all kinds came at us in waves. Black, Red and Green Abishai were everywhere. It began to wear on us. Though we could put any one fiend down quickly, it took time to kill the dozen or so that would attack at one time. We were getting nibbled to death.

Finding a host of Green Abishai I hit upon a plan. Dak'kon cast Swarm while I cast Fire and Ice. It worked beautifully. The fiends stood in confusion under the Swarm spell long enough to be hit and killed by the fire- and ice-balls.

We fought our way southwest to the portal. I cut myself with a piece of obsidian, the portal formed and we stepped through into the Outlands.

Outlands

Fhjull Forked-Tongue

We hacked through the Grilligs and Gronks and went to see Fhjull. He was just delighted to see us. I asked him how to get out of the crater. He told me there was another portal under the arse end of the creature, leading to Curst.

As I took my leave the repo-fiends arrived. Fhjull called me a few more names and we had a grand free-for-all fight. We whacked on fiend after fiend until only we were left standing. It turns out Fhjull was holding out on us after all. We found an enchanted hammer on his body.

After loading up with what loot we could carry we set out to find the portal back to Curst, killing many more Grilligs and Gronks on the way. As it turned out, the portal was actually under the beast's right femur, not his arse.

Curst Gone

Fiend from Moridor's Box

I couldn't tell where we were and it occurred to me that Fhjull could have found some way to trick us, even with the contract. Some great cataclysm had struck this place. Hardly one stone was standing upon another. As we explored to the west we saw a huge creature approach. It was nearly twice as tall as I and had four arms. It attacked us on sight.

It was a terrific fight. Some of our weapons could not harm the creature at all and we used up many charms. The creature struck puissant blows that did great damage. After what seemed like a small eternity, the beast died.

On the body we found a thousand coppers and the Aegis of Torment, a most useful ring.

Dak'kon and Vhailor were sorely wounded, so we rested.

Gate Heads

Finally, a sign of where we were: the gate to Carceri. The heads were talking, chanting to form sentences. I asked what happened to the town. They said it was gone on the wind, swept on a tide of evil. Through the gate. The town lost to its own hatred into the prison Plane, Carceri.

I asked about Carceri and they gave me another set of odd phrases, so I asked if they couldn't speak normally. They said that beyond the veil all is shadowed. Nothing translates, nothing easy, no.

I asked what happened to them. They said they were betrayed, despised, framed. Hung there by enemies. I asked if it was just me or were there far too many talking disembodied heads around these days. **(3000)**

They paused and then looked at me. Then they hung shamefully from the gate.

I asked if they had any idea how to get to Carceri or to get Curst back here. They said through the gate, into the prison. No return. They said my destiny awaited me there.

I asked what they knew about my destiny. They said that the deva awaited me. After that, they remained silent.

In a locked crate near what must have been the Warehouse we found a Cockroach Charm and a few coppers. In another nearby were some coppers and a Corpse Fly Charm.

Carceri

As we walking through the portal I had a feeling it wasn't going to get any easier ...

Berrog

He was trapped underneath a wagon, which was slowly crushing him. He asked me to get the wagon off of him and I said all right, I'd get it off.

Before I could do so, he asked if someone was still trapped on the other side. I said he was still there. He said that I would have to find a way to save him, too. He also said it was better to free the other man as Berrog thought the other man was the mayor or something.

Tovus Giljaf

He heard us and said he was the Burgher. He said if I freed him the guards could help against the tide of monsters between the deva and me but if I freed Berrog I would gain nothing.

Berrog said that was true, but surely the tide of good would swing if I saved him without thought of gain. Better still to save them both.

I said that I thought my companions and I could lift the wagon off of both of them. We gathered around the cart and lifted it such that both men could escape.

Tovus gave us his thanks and a scroll of Deathbolt. Berrog thanked me and said he would return to Mount Celestia.

Dump Caretaker

I was about to leave when the caretaker hailed me and told me what had happened to the town. He also told me of places I could rest and gave me a scroll of Meteor Bombardment.

Moving west we found two Gehreleth that were killing the townsfolk. We ran to slay them before more were killed. (14000, 225000)

To the north we saw Jasilya running from several thugs. We went to her aid and killed them.

Jasilya

I went to see if she was alright. She moved to embrace me in thanks and I allowed her to put her arms around me. She thanked me and said she would not forget my kindness. **(75000)**

Jujog

Going north we saw a group of men gathered before the doors of a warehouse. I went up to their leader and spoke to him. I asked what was going on.

He said they were about to loot the warehouse and offered to let me join in. I suggested that if we calmed things down it would help the town slide back onto the Outlands. I asked him how long he thought he'd live to enjoy the spoils of his looting once Curst was wholly overrun with monsters.

He said I was right, told the looters to pike off and thanked me. **(150000)**

Warehouse

There were a number of Anarchists inside, as well as Ebb Creakknees

Ebb Creakknees

He was going to lead the rabble collected here in a revolt against the town leaders. I said that the town was in chaos and I was seeking allies in stomping it out. He said they sought to increase the chaos, overthrow the old order to ensure that the old schemes did not rise again.

I asked why they would want to increase the chaos, since the town was already in Carceri and the citizens were being devoured.

He said that when the people saw that their leaders had failed them chances were good they'd crush the power structures that had repressed them and make something new, something beautiful. They were going to help them.

I said so they were going to help fight the fiends, then? He asked what I meant. I said that while they'd been plotting the overthrow of the city government, evil had come to Curst and was destroying what was left of the city.

He said they must do something and gave me a scroll of Desert Hell. He rallied his troops and went off. I wished him good luck.

Inside the warehouse in a crate I found several hundred coppers, a Charcoal Charm and a Magus Shield bracelet. In another crate I found scrolls of Cure Critical Wounds, Ice Knife and Ball Lightning.

On the right of the door as we entered the warehouse, in a pile of lumber was a scroll of wishes.

[This is at x395, y285. If you give the scroll to a non-magic user you can use the scroll again and again.]

Distillery

Kester

There were several thugs attacking Kester, so we killed them. He thanked us for our help. I said good luck and left.

An'izius

He looked desperate and asked me for help to convince the judge that his crimes were not crimes at all. I said I would try.

Judge

I approached the judge. He was an arrogant little sot, all puffed up with self-importance. I said that if he executed An'izius it would add to the chaos that threw the town into Carceri.

He looked at me, then An'izius, then me again. He said my words were both clever and wise and he thanked me. He said there would be no more executions and told the guards to release An'izius. **(225000)**

There was an endless stream of monsters of all sorts near the Administration building, including two wizards. The fighting was confused. Packs of guards and monsters chased each other back and forth. At least the guards weren't attacking us.

Nearby, to the east, were a group of Thokola and a wizard surrounding a man. We went to investigate.

Hezobol

The wizard was yelling at his subordinates that they only had so much time to make a sacrifice. When we attracted his attention he said he was capitalizing on the chaos.

I told him it was this sort of behavior that brought the town to the fix it was in. I asked him to join me. He called out to his men, telling them to stop what they were doing. He asked if I was saying we wouldn't need a sacrifice to the Gehreleths.

I said no, the entire town would be a sacrifice unless he worked with the other citizens. **(150000)** He said it was just his luck, but he told his men to let everyone go and thanked me for the tip. I said good luck.

Administration Building

We entered the building and were immediately attacked by Sohmien and the looters. We searched all the many shelves and bookcases and found a number of healing charms, bandages and needles. In a room to the southeast, almost hidden, was a Heart Charm. As we searched the room we had to kill a large number of looters.

When we started up the stairs, a great number of Sohmien and looters attacked us. We killed them and made our way up the stairs. In some filing cabinets in a room to the northeast, we found 3000 coppers, Thrice Blind Charm, 2 Heart Charms and an Adder's Tear.

In what appeared to be the meeting hall, a fierce battle was going on between slavers and Gehreleth. We weighed in slaying both sides equally. In a small room southeast off a corridor, leading away from the meeting hall, we found a bookshelf that has a 2 Heart Charms and a Scroll of Deathbolt.

Going upstairs, a guard, breathing his last, warned us to be ready for the deva. In a desk nearby we found a host of magicked weapons. There were 3 enchanted axes, 3 enchanted hammers, the Vrock Club, the Edge of Oblivion and Porphatys Dagger.

Trias

I chose to leave Vhailor behind while I spoke to Trias. Trias was now his true self, arrogant and condescending. We talked a great deal about the whys and wherefores of his actions. He was recruiting a host to assail the higher Planes. Suffice it to say, he was justified in his own mind and insisted on fighting.

After a great struggle, he yielded saying in his weakened state he was no match for me. I said even in his full glory he would be no match and demanded what I needed to know. He said if I truly wished the knowledge, I must spare his life. I said that I vowed to spare his life if he gave me the knowledge I sought.

He told me the portal was in the mortuary. I asked what was the key. He said when I passed near the portal I should keep regret in my mind. I said and? He said while the chill of regret bathed me, I must tear off a piece of my own skin and write a regret upon it with blood from my left index finger.

I asked how he knew this. He said he had sought many alliances and once he went to the fortress. I asked what he could tell me of the keeper. He said he was powerful and I would not best him. I was on an errand only undertaken by fools.

I said I might be foolish, but I would know more about this keeper. He said my adversary knew more about me than I would ever know. I asked what he would do when I had left. He said he would once again try to levy a host against the gates of paradise. He said they would not have him back and there was no other purpose to his existence.

I asked if he had forgotten the face of his father. He asked what I meant. I said that the Upper Planes were the home of justice, beauty and goodness. They

were also home of forgiveness. I told him to go home, admit his error and beg forgiveness.

He bowed his head and said I spoke convincing words. He handed me a scroll of Celestial Host, saying take this and bid me farewell. I wished him luck and he left.

[You will have to fight him the first time. If you want a radical change to the chaotic, vow to let him go and then join in when Vhailor wants to slay him AFTER you've finished the first fight. You get 375000 for killing him. And if you have Vhailor in your party there is no way to stop Vhailor from killing him at the end.]

After dusting ourselves off we walked through the portal back to the Hive ...

Player's Maze

I had been looking at the child's doll of the Lady off and on for some time and curiosity overcame me. I took the doll out and called many times truly for her aid. After some time the doll changed in appearance. I continued to call but nothing happened ... until I left the southwest Hive to go to the market.

I found myself alone and elsewhere. I wandered about the maze for some time until I came to a burnt out fire and old campsite in the northeast. I searched the site and found the Brimstone Hammer and a journal made of skin and bones, I suspected my skin and bones.

Once I found the key to the journal I started working my way through the portals entering each one twice before entering another. There were two portals on one section of the maze in the southeast. The one furthest east, when I entered a second time, took me straight to another portal. I walked through the portal I had just appeared from and I returned to my companions.

I asked them to join me once more, and then we went off to shop at Fell's. We went shopping everywhere. We all could sense that this would be the last fight and we wanted to be ready.

Lower Ward

Siege Tower

Coaxmetal

I thought to visit Old Rusty one last time before heading in to see if he had anything useful on hand or if he had any further advice about the Fortress. He did have a little to say about the Fortress, but not much else.

As I was about to leave he said there was something I must do. I asked what.

"SUNDER THIS PRISON. FREE ME. MY PURPOSE CANNOT BE FILLED IN THE CAGE."

I asked, "How could I free you?"

"GIVE ME THE PLANAR CUBE YOU CARRY. IT CAN FREE ME FROM THIS PLACE."

"Alright, here you are."

The next thing I knew we were outside in the Lower Ward and in place of the Modron Cube I had something called the Entropic Blade.

[The Entropic Blade is a marvelous weapon and if you do not talk to it you can use it as a mage even though it says you can't. Once you talk to it ONLY a fighter can use it.]

When you enter the Fortress you will be split up. Put ALL your healing charms, etc. with Nameless. Put all the weapons for your other characters (like Ingress' teeth for Morte) and all the equipment they can wear in Nameless' inventory that you can carry. You will be glad you did later. Trust me.]

Northeast Hive

Mortuary

I returned to the room I first woke up in, thinking to start my search from there. Walking to the northeast of that room, Nordom detected a portal.

[You will not be able to return and only you are going on this trip. So make sure you have everything you need on you when you go, including the Negative Token, the Blade of the Immortal and the Bronze Sphere.]

I grit my teeth and peeled off skin to write a regret. Then I pricked my left index finger and inscribed a regret. I wrote that I regretted what happened to my companions.

The thought echoed through my mind, "I regretted all my companions had to suffer for me to reach here." I watched the blood dry ... **(250000)**

I felt a terrible cold. As I looked around, the room changed: the black pillars to either side of the arch glowed and motes of blue light drifted from their sides to form a curtain. Beyond the curtain was a stone causeway leading into darkness.

I asked if everyone was ready. Each of my companions replied in their fashion. Morte, of course, had something else to say. He told me there was something I needed to know. I asked what it was. He said it was about where we were going or actually, where we been.

I asked what are you talking about? He said this wasn't the first time we'd been through this. He said we'd been to the Fortress before, though he didn't know it then. I asked how it was possible that he didn't know. He said it was hard to explain until you been there.

He said he knew I was looking for some place, but he didn't know why, where or what it was. So he couldn't say anything to me cause he didn't know anything. He just knew what happened when we got there.

I asked what happened. He said when they went into the Fortress they were all split up, fighting for their lives. He said the thing is, even split up they might be my only hope.

I asked why do you say that. He said because whatever was waiting in the Fortress had already defeated me once. He said if I fell again I was going to need someone to pull me out.

I told him I needed him to tell me everything he could about the Fortress. He said the Fortress stretched on for leagues and everywhere shadows. I asked what happened when we first went there. He said he didn't know what happened to me but he spent his time running from vault to vault with shadows crawling all over him. Then suddenly we were out like someone had pulled us back.

I said that when he said 'us' it didn't sound like it meant just him and me. He was silent. Dak'kon said that he had walked my path many times. A portion of my path was known to him. Five walked the path to the Fortress. Each died their own death.

Oh yes. Ever cheerful, that Dak'kon. I asked who were they and how did they die?

He said he died the death of faith; the skull died the death of courage; the woman died the death of grief; the blind archer died the final and most merciful death, the death of the body. And I died the death of memory.

I asked who these people were. Morte said the skull was him; the woman was Deionarra; he never knew the archer ... Dak'kon said that the archer was the one who knew his targets without seeing them. He said that many shadows fell beneath his rain of arrows.

Morte rattled and said there were shadows everywhere. Dak'kon said there was darkness there and every shadow was Shra'kt'lor. He said they were tormented creatures that knew my wounds and would attack me through them.

Morte said they spoke to him like the Pillar of Skulls. He whispered that they knew ...

I told them I needed to know all they knew about the Fortress. He said that the shadows suffer. They know how to torture me, with that which had wounded my heart. When I faced them I would face that which had killed me before.

I asked what happened to the archer and Deionarra. He said the archer died the death of the body; the woman died the death of the spirit. He said he could not

save the woman because it was not my will that she be saved. Her grave was dry of tears for no one know to mourn her passing.

I asked why I did not want her saved. He said my will was known only to me. I said I still needed to know all I could about the Fortress.

Morte said he couldn't tell me anymore except it was a huge place, crawling with shadows and somewhere in that Fortress was something more powerful than any of us.

Dak'kon said nothing lives there. The walls were darkness.

I asked if there was anything else that might help. Morte said that the me that led them there wasn't like me at all.

Oh, I AM getting another headache. I asked what he meant. He said the other me didn't care much for anybody. They would have all died in the Fortress and I wouldn't have blinked. He said he wanted me to hold on to my differences, because he liked this me a lot better.

I said that wasn't all he wanted to say, was it. He said no, there was one other thing. He said that he might not have liked that other me, but he was one smart basher. He always had every angle covered. If he died at that Fortress ... well ...

I asked didn't he think I could succeed? He said no, it wasn't that. Because it's not always who's smartest or the most powerful or the toughest. Sometimes it came down to who you were and what you really wanted. He said be sure of what I want this time.

I said that was fair enough. I asked him if he knew that he didn't have to come with me to this place. I said I'd understand if he didn't want to.

He said he knew and he couldn't lie to me; he didn't want to go, but he would. I should also know that once we went through that portal it wouldn't be just about me anymore. It would be their lives and they don't get up when they die.

I said then why was he ... He said it was as Ravel had spoken: that I drew people who suffer to me, like a lodestone. He said maybe it was because I'd been suffering all that time. Maybe when I ended up settling things they'd know a bit of peace too.

I said maybe so. Was he with me? He asked why not? He said they'd gone to every other horrible Plane in the multiverse he could think of. Why not take that extra step over the cliff. Was I ready?

I said I was ready. There was nothing more I could do. Was he with me?

He said sure, let's go. Anywhere else has got to be better than rattling our bone-box in the Mortuary.

I said all right, then ... and the portal formed. We held our breath and took a step ...

Fortress of Regret

I was alone ... It felt more final, this time. Around me, this huge structure, like a cage, floating in the air ... if it was air.

Fortress Entrance

Before entering the Fortress itself I explored the series of catwalks I was standing on. At one dead end in the southeast was perhaps my deepest regret ... Deionarra.

Deionarra

I called her name. She said I should not be here, I should leave at once. I asked if this was the Fortress. She said it was. It was the place that held the moment of her death prisoner and she may not stray far from its halls. If I could find a way back I must. If I stayed there, I would die.

I said I was immortal; I didn't think I had much to worry about, even here. She shook her head and said no, there was something about this Fortress. The shell that surrounded it cut it off from the rest of the Planes. It was that shell that acted as a barrier to my immortality.

I asked how this shell could act as an obstacle. She said as she had maintained her vigil in that place she had come to learn the nature of my immortality. It was a thing which hungered for the lives of others. At the moment of my death it claimed another living thing in my place, allowing me to live. The soul that died in my place was brought there, to the Fortress, as a shadow. She believed that the shell prevented my immortality from finding another victim.

I said so, when I died, another died in my place and if there wasn't another living thing to die for me ... She said then if I died in this place it would be the end.

I told her that my allies were here and that meant they were inside this shell. What would happen to them if I died?

She said that if I'd brought anything that lived with me to this place, then it was in terrible danger, both from the shadows and me. Should I die there my

immortality would hunt for the closest living thing in the Fortress and that would be the one that would die in my place. I must leave there, now.

I said that I couldn't go back. Could she tell me anything else that might be helpful? She said there was no natural darkness within the Fortress, only the shades of those who had died in my place. The energies of this Plane fed them and their hatred for me was beyond all reason. She begged me not to leave her.

Soul or not, I felt torn inside. I told her that my allies were in there and I could not leave them. Did she know where they might be?

She said if there were others, then they were cast from me when I arrived. It was the nature of this place to divide living things, and then kill them. The Fortress was a thing of many miles; finding my friends there would be difficult.

I said that I had to find them. There was no choice in the matter. She said if I intended to go on I should know that past the entrance to the Fortress was a great antechamber with countless shadows. I would have to move swiftly and not let them gather about me or I would surely be slain.

One thing more ... Within the chamber were great clocks, which I spoke of once as having been the key to my escaping that chamber when I was trapped there before. She said she would watch for me and help me if she could.

Ever faithful to the faithless, she was. I told her that I'd brought her ring; that I had found her legacy to me.

She said the ring still held a part of her within it. She closed her eyes for a moment and I felt a warmth pass through me. Startling, it was, in this cold, heartless place. She smiled and said that she knew I would return to her with the ring in my keeping. Through it she would defend me.

I told her she had my thanks, but I must go.

I reached the gate ... immense shutters ground open, and then the whole door retracted into the wall. I walked through ...

Fortress Interior

In front of me was a murky pool. Around me was a vast structure of which I could see only the smallest part. To the east I saw my first Greater Shadow. I rushed toward it and struck it down.

Near where the thing fell was an odd clock. I examined it and found something crudely scratched on the clock face and I knew that it was a message to me, from me.

I examined my writing, which looked to have been carved by a dagger: Run. Doors are lies. Use Cannons, then portal.

Moving in the direction opposite the hand I encountered an ancient war relic. I examined the panel of levers. One was marked with an X. Trusting me, I pulled it.

I was suddenly elsewhere in the Fortress, surrounded by four shadows. Using the Entropic Blade they did not take many strokes to kill. There were four of them and while they did not hit me often, I was struck a fierce blow. However, because of my tattoos and ring, I healed almost as the blow fell.

Walking back toward where I thought I had been, to the east, down the middle of three staircases, I found balcony that overlooked the larger part of the interior.

There was another war relic near a large pillar. I examined that one, also. I looked for the lever marked with an X.

And faded again ... This time I had a vision of that strange, green specter I'd seen before when "he" attacked Ravel. Now I saw Annah ... No. Please no. So many times he threw Fire and Ice at her. And she died. Was death all I ever brought? She told him what she could not tell me; that I was more to her than her life and he told her she was nothing to me. Who or what he was I did not know, but he would die for this. He would die.

This time I was in a small balcony to the west. I went north and east, slaying as I went. There were shadows and more shadows and I killed them as I ran. My hatred for them and their Master now as pure as theirs for me.

Walking up a wide, steep staircase that ran north I found another clock. This one had no writing. To the east of the clock, almost obscured by a pillar was another relic. I paused, wandering who I would kill next. Another lever, another X. I threw it ...

And saw Nordom. Confused as always, but full of fight for my sake. Even he, metal and gears animate, defied the Green One. Then, Nordom was full of death, if such as he could live or die.

I was back where I started, near the entrance. I walked north, toward the central and largest section of this great Fortress. Near one of two great pillars was another relic. One more war relic, one more X. One more trip to? ...

Nowhere, apparently. No dizzying drop, no vision. This time I heard a great rushing as if a god had opened a window. The rushing became wind. The wind became me or I the wind ... Now what?

This time the Green One ... No, the Green Murderer spoke to Dak'kon and offered him terms. Dak'kon refused and was swallowed up in shadows. Was he killed? Did I hear his death? Had I caused all this death by pulling the lever? Too many questions ...

I was on the east balcony. The rushing seemed louder as I went towards the wide staircase I'd been up before. Now a portal stood in the arch between the clock and the relic. If my companions could die with such valor, so could I. I stepped through.

Trial of Impulse

I was in a diamond-shaped chamber with a large opening in the center. In the opening was a crystal, floating. Around the chamber were several statues that seemed to be of me. To my left as I walked into the chamber I saw Ignus. Having seen him recruited by the Green Murderer I knew that that part, at least, of my visions had been true.

If magic was what he desired, then magic he would have. We threw spell after spell, each trying to be first and disrupt the other. If I was not close to completing a spell and saw him start, I would take the spell, counting on my regenerative powers to heal me. I caught him with Elysium's Tears, then threw Chromatic Orb, after Orb at him. Then Adder's Kiss, Fire and Ice and finally Force Missiles just as he gathered himself to cast something evil at me. With that, he was dead.

Searching the room I found a strange stone by a statue to the northeast. It contained instructions to my companions from the last venture here. In the southwest, hidden in the base of a statue I found 3 Heart Charms, 2 Charcoal Charms, a Blood Fly and a Bone Charm.

Then I went to the crystal and touched it. I felt tearing, cutting, shearing ... then blackness.

Maze of Reflections

I woke up in a room that might have been carved from obsidian surrounded by myself ... all three of me.

The good me spoke first. Then the practical and last the paranoid. Of course, they started to argue. At last, the practical me overruled the others and spoke. He refused to answer my questions and cut through to the essence. He said there was no time for questions. I had wondered how I could be beside myself, but with the headache that was forming in my frontal lobe I was beginning not to care. My explanations would likely only make it worse.

Practical Incarnation

From here on I will use "he" or call my other selves by their outlook to avoid confusion ... and another headache.

After his long instructions I asked if he intended to possess me. He said yes, that we could not leave this place in pieces. Only one of us could leave. I asked how we would become one.

He said I would have to surrender to his will. There were so many questions. I insisted that he answer them all. It got interesting when I asked him if he was responsible for the directions on my back. He said he did that because he knew there was a chance that he might fail and lose his memories.

He had the directions stitched on his back since such things like journals tend to be lost. I said that the directions were kind of vague. He said they needed to be

vague. What would have happened if a Dustman had read them? How quickly would we have been buried alive or cremated?

I asked what about sending me to seek out Pharod? Why him? He said he struck a bargain with Pharod. Pharod would see to it that if his men found him they would take him to the Mortuary and, of course, he needed the eyes and hands of Pharod's men to scour the catacombs beneath Sigil.

I asked what for. He said a sphere ... I completed his sentence ... made of bronze. Ugly. Felt like an egg to the touch and smelled of rotten custard, right?

He said yes, he told Pharod it was the only thing that would save his life. Pharod knew he was destined to end up on the Pillar of Skulls when he died and he was trying to weasel out of it. So he told Pharod that there was an item beneath Sigil that would save him.

I said that it wouldn't save him; it was just something he wanted Pharod to find. He said of course, but nothing motivated a man faster than telling him what he seeks would save his soul. He had intended to take the sphere from Pharod after he found it. Searching for it himself would have taken too long. Why should he do it when he could have someone else hunt for it?

I said that Pharod ended up tricking me into finding it for him. I asked why it was so important. He said didn't I know? Did I have it with me?

I said yes, I brought it with me. He said then my life had some use after all. When we merged he would see about finding a means to unlock it. I asked what it was and why it was important. (96000)

He said it was a dead sensory stone that contained the last experiences of the first of us. When we were one man, not a string of incarnations. If he could unlock it, he would be able to see inside our first self's mind.

I asked to see why this all happened? He said yes, it was the answer he had always sought. Why this happened and why we became immortal.

All other questions exhausted, I told him that I would not merge with him, he would merge with me. He smiled incredulously and said he surrendered to no man, that I would be absorbed by him.

I said I doubted it. He asked if I intended to fight him, saying I was no match for him. I said try me. He said so be it. We locked gazes and his eyes started to drag me down.

I locked gazes with him and tried to force him to merge with me. As I swam in the corridors of his mind, the first emotion I encountered was surprise. He was not absorbing me. My will was stronger and was consuming him. He fought back, desperately, but he could not. I told him that this was the last time we would ever speak, that he should return to death, where he belonged.

He looked incredulous a moment longer, then disintegrates and I felt a rush of knowledge pouring through me. So much knowledge, so many experiences ... **(96000, wisdom and intelligence +1)** as quickly as it occurred, the rush subsided and I steadied myself.

While knowing swirled in my head, one thing was clear: he had not known how to leave this place. He had lied to trick me into surrendering.

Good Incarnation

I asked who he was. He said I should know that he was my ally. He was a figment, all that remained after he died in my mind. Again I asked who he was. He said he was one of my incarnations.

I asked how that was possible. He said he did not know, but whatever I'd touched within the Fortress had brought pieces of myself to the surface.

I said that if he was part of me, there were things I must know. He told me to ask. We talked a great deal. He was obviously trying to help as much as he could.

I asked him why there were only three incarnations here when I had had countless lives. He said he did not know, but said that perhaps we were the three pieces that were somehow still present in my mind.

I asked how they were present. He said he did not know for sure, but would guess that when we died traces of the former personality may remain in my mind. He knew that sometimes they could make themselves felt.

I asked how. He said when I was about to place myself in danger or was close to a realization, he found that he could stir to help prod me in the right direction. I said so he was the crawling sensation I kept feeling in the back of my skull? He said it was possible, yes.

To confirm what he said I asked if when we died traces were left in the mind that caused them all to emerge, right? He said that his understanding might not be complete, but yes, that seemed to be the case.

I asked was it possible that the first of us, the real one, before all the incarnations, might still be buried somewhere in my mind. **(96000)**

The expression on his face flickered for just a moment, but it was like a window. I suddenly realized who I was speaking to. I said he was the first of us.

His eyes took on a haunted look and his gaze turned away from mine. He said that he knew what I was thinking, but it was not the case. He said I was thinking that knowing the mind of the first of us would somehow help me here. It would not.

I asked why? I had some many questions that only he could answer. I asked why we became immortal. He said because if we died, truly died ... As his voice trailed off, his eyes were like steel. He said Death's kingdom would not be paradise for us. The evil of the other's lives was but a drop of water compared to the evil of his. His life, even without the thousands of others, had given us a seat in the Lower Planes for eternity.

I was surprised at his statement. I said that he seemed so much calmer and well intentioned. He said he became that way. For him it was regret that might change the nature of a man, but it was too late. He was already damned.

He said he found that changing his nature was not enough. He needed more time and he needed more life. So he went to the greatest of the Gray Sisters and asked her for a boon: to make me immortal.

I said but when she killed him he forgot everything. He looked bereft. He said the Planes had been dying ever since. The crime was great and the blame was his.

I said there were so many questions I had for him ... He shook his head, cutting me off and said when he became no more, when he merged with me, I would have the answers I sought.

I said very well, then. Was he ready? He said one last thing. Before he returned to oblivion there was something he would know. I said I could spare a little time for this, what did he wish to know?

He asked if I lived my life, the brief one I'd had? In the end was it worth it?

I said it had seemed so short, but what little I had experienced, I had enjoyed and I did not wish to forget it. (**Wisdom +1, 32000**) He nodded and then collapsed, his life flowing into me. I felt that familiar crawling sensation in the back of my skull and knew he was no more.

Paranoid Incarnation

This must have been the lunatic that nearly trapped me in the sensory stone. He watched me like a hunted animal, hissing as I approached him. I asked who he was.

He said I would not last long in this place, calling me a thief. Mazes and regrets and death were all that were here. I asked what he meant.

He said I was a thief, that he would feel the bones of my neck snap beneath his fingers. I wore his body like a cloak and shamed him. I said I was no thief and had stolen nothing from him.

He said that I had stolen everything. He awoke on the streets of the ring city and all who saw him knew him. All I had done, all that I had harmed, they were waiting for him, blaming him, hurting him until he couldn't take the voices anymore and had to make them silent.

I warily asked him questions about his actions, but was careful not to insult him. At last I spoke to him in the language of the Uyo, thinking that that might relax his fears somewhat.

I said let us speak in private, just the two of us. His eyes drew wide as I spoke and he replied in the same language, saying only he knew the language of the Uyo. How did I know it?

I said he was correct, only HE knew the language. Thus if I knew the language of the Uyo, I must be him. I was beginning to understand him. Oh, my aching head.

He was silent, staring at me. I said it was these others who were not him, for they did not know the language of the Uyo. He said that he heard me. I said that this place confused one's perceptions, that we were both he and now we must become as one.

This frightened him, like a child afraid of the dark. He reverted to normal speech. His voice was inflectionless, calm and level. He said he no longer wished to live like this.

I found emotions within me I did not expect. I felt sorrow for this man/child ... for what he had suffered. I felt more enmity for the Practical One, who had done his evil for convenience and expedience alone, like a blade that cares not for what it cleaves.

I told him he had suffered much. He was born into a world where nothing made sense, where strangers claimed they knew him, blamed him for things he knew nothing of and they tried to hurt him.

He looked at me and I saw the mad gleam gradually leave his eyes. He said yes ...

I told him I would protect him now. He would know peace, for that was all he had ever wanted, wasn't it?

He relaxed at my words, his eyes dimming as he locked gazes with me. There was a faint whisper, and then he fell to the black stones. As he fell there was a prickling, crawling sensation in the back of my skull. **(Strength and constitution +1, 64000)**

There were a flood of memories and emotions. I steadied myself, dizzy for a moment, then my vision cleared and I was myself once more.

In going through my possessions to decide what to take and what to leave I pondered the Bronze Sphere, knowing what I now knew about what was contained inside. I used the sphere ...

I felt the memories of the first of us stir in my mind. Calm, like the air after a storm. I felt my last moments, before I met Ravel on the Gray Waste and asked the impossible of her.

I knew why. And I knew that I could touch the surface of the sphere and feel regret and the stone would open itself to me. I clasped the stone and thought of Deionarra ...

The skin of the sphere wrinkled away into tears, turning into a rain of bronze that encircled me. Each droplet that entered me was a new memory: a lost love, a forgotten pain, an ache of loss. With the memories came a great wave of regret, the pressure of careless actions, suffering, war, death and I felt my mind begin to

buckle from the pressure. Too much, all at once ... so much damage done to others ... so much an entire Fortress could be built from such pain.

I tried to focus and keep my center. Then, through the torrent of regrets, I felt the fist incarnation again. His hand was on my shoulder, steadying me. He did not speak, but with his touch I remembered my name ... **(2000000)**

... and it was such a simple thing, not at all what I thought it might have been and I felt comforted. Knowing my name, my true name I knew that I had gained back the most important part of myself, my identity. Knowing my name I knew myself and knew now there was very little I could not do. I could feel my first self smiling while he watched.

I said that was my name all along? He held his finger to his lips and nodded at the symbol on my arm as if I should make use of it. I examined my arm. I pulled the symbol of Torment from my arm. It gave slight resistance, like pulling off a scab. Looking at it, I knew I could harness its power, that it no longer ruled me.

I said that I no longer wore the symbol. Did that mean ...

But as I spoke, I knew there was no one to hear my answer. There was only the sound of my own thoughts. He was gone. I took the symbol of Torment.

[Before talking to Deionarra, level up and rest. You cannot rest in the next section at all. Also, save the game here under a couple of different names. You can save at the beginning of the next section, but that's it.]

Deionarra

Coming to myself, I looked around the room and saw that I was not alone. Deionarra was there, waiting as always. I approached her and called her name.

She said she had searched for me after I was divided by the crystal, but the Fortress spanned hundreds of miles and she feared I was lost to her. Her eyes took me in, searching my body for new wounds. She asked if I was well.

I said I thought so. The crystal had divided me, but I was one again. Now I was trapped here, however.

She said she thought that trapping me here was the crystal's true purpose, but it posed no barrier for one such as she. She said she would see to it I was set free and asked where I wished to go.

I said that I wished to speak to her for a moment to tell her how she died and why. She asked what I was speaking of. I said truly that when I brought her to this Fortress it was my intention that she die here. I told her I needed someone to remain behind so that they would serve as a link to this place. I knew that because she loved me so much that her love would stave off death and allow her to become a spirit, which was why she suffered now.

Her face became a mask as I spoke. I told her truly that I was sorry. She asked if I loved her and said that if I said yes, then nothing that had happened mattered.

I felt a strange sensation at the corners of my eyes. I put up my hands to my face and they came away wet ... and I knew my answer: I said truly that though I did not know her at first, I had come to love her. Her suffering had become mine and I had found that I would do what I could to help her.

She said she would aid me. Only tell her how she could help me and she would do it. I said I was trapped here. Could she help me escape?

She said if I was trapped she would set me free. Where did I wish to go? I said I wished to go to where my mortality was and recover it. She said as I wished and stretched out her hand. She told me to touch her hand and the walls of this Fortress would be walls no more. I touched her hand ...

Fortress Roof

... And found myself standing on a high parapet. It must have been the roof of part of this immense structure. As I looked about, I saw my companions ... what should have given me relief, did not, for they were dead. All dead.

I walked forward, thinking to revive them, but could not. I could see no one living here. Was I to stay here for eternity, with only my dead companions for company?

[Be sure and save before proceeding. You will not get another chance in the game. You should also take moment to make sure you have the weapons for your companions like Morte and Annah and as much of their trinkets. You will not have a chance to equip them once they are alive.]

Also, there is more than one ending to the game. More than one of the main dialog choices with The Transcendent One leads to an end. In playing this part a second time to see how much Dak'kon and Vhailor's stats were boosted I found a peaceful ending. I leave those discoveries to you.]

The Transcendent One

I then moved past them to the northwest and the vile one appeared: the Green Murderer. I ran toward him, expecting to fight, but he spoke to me in the rich, deep voice I had only heard in visions, saying that I was unwelcome here.

I asked what he had done to my friends. He said they died for me as they always have. It was the fate of all who followed me.

I asked why he did it. He said they tried to harm him. Here, of all places. He defended himself. In so doing, mortality claimed them. Their deaths were by their own hand.

He said that he gave them the opportunity to depart, but they seemed determined to help me.

I said so you killed them. He said the tiefling girl was especially fierce in my defense. Her feelings for me burned brighter than Elysium's fires. He said he took no pleasure in their deaths.

I asked why he did it, then. He said it was not his will, not he that brought them there. All had a choice and they chose to die for me. He said it had always been the way of all that followed me for they were tormented souls, seeking a release, who knew not why. He said I had forgotten this and would again.

With dawning horror I knew the riddle of his identity. I told him I knew him for what he was, my mortality. His armor was twisted like tree branches. Such signs spoke of Ravel's magicks.

He said yes, he was that which was split from me by the Hag's power. He was that which walked with all life. His voice was a death rattle, a last breath in the throat, the whisper of a dying man. He said he had been freed from the prison of my flesh.

I asked, freed from me? He said the moment he was split from my cancerous shell, he knew life, freedom, and he would not surrender it to me.

I said that we were not meant to be separated and the Planes had suffered because of our separation. He said I knew nothing of meaning and separation. Before my memory died again, know that we were never meant to be as one.

Angry as I was, I was still brought up short by this. He said this would be the last time he and I spoke.

I said then there was something I would know. I had traveled far and there were many questions only he could answer. He said he would indulge me this one last time, then the Fortress would be silent again.

I said then my questions were these ...

He said to ask my questions, but know I would never remember the answers.

I told him that I wanted my friends' lives returned to them and I wanted them to have free passage from this place. He said no. They were dead and dead they shall remain.

I asked why, didn't he have the power? He said I should not question his power here, in this place. There was nothing he could not do. Now that he was free of me.

I suppose I should send a candygram to Baator and Celestia to let them know. He said it was not his will that they be saved. They challenged him in his home and their deaths would be reminders to all that challenge him.

I said he couldn't resurrect them, could he. He said that in the span of my forgotten lifetimes he had observed, learned and gathered power within the vaults of his body.

When I fought in the Black Decade War, all my military knowledge was carved in his mind. When I danced sorceries with Lum the Mad, He learned with me. All I had forgotten, he had not. The power over life and death was but a minor display of his power.

I said when he said he learned with me, what I experienced, was he saying we shared a link?

He said it was a small thing, of no consequence. I told him that Deionarra had said that I could reverse death only when the victim had died close to me, but what she awakened in me – was he saying that was only a fraction of my power of life and death?

He said my mind was a broken stone, its edges dull from misuse and neglect. Even if I knew power, I would not know how to harness it.

I said if he claimed he had the power, then I must have the power too, even if I wasn't there at the moment of death. He said I did not have the years needed to learn the arts of life and death.

I felt a stirring in my mind and I knew that I did possess the years needed to learn, for I knew it all once, across my incarnations. But the process would take time and I knew my mortality would not allow me the time I needed. I might have time to resurrect one companion, but no more than that.

I told him that as I had made my way here I had opened the inner vault. The Greater Shadows were running free in the Fortress, no longer locked in that chamber.

He said that I lied. I told him to see for himself, if he didn't believe me.

He said he would return and then take my measure. If I had freed the Shadows he would feed me to them. I said I'd be here ... IF he made it back.

Morte

As soon as the Murderer left I reached out to revive Morte. But as I did he told me to hold up, that there were a few things he needed to tell me.

I was stunned. He wasn't dead?

He said yeah, when you've been dead as long as he had, you learn to fake it really well. He'd been listening to our whole conversation. I should use that power on someone else; he didn't need it.

I asked if he was going to lie there while I had my ass handed to me. He said yeah, it wasn't like I'd die. If I failed I'd need someone to remember for me. Plus, I should know how worthless he was in a fight, when he wasn't taunting some mage. I said that maybe that was what I'd need him to do.

Dak'kon

I then brought Dak'kon back. He looked up, weakly, barely clinging to life.

I told him that once he had made the Pronouncement of Two Deaths as One. It was that time.

His eyes closed for a moment, then they opened and his eyes were no longer the dead black I knew. Instead, they carried the metal texture of his blade and I knew that Dak'kon had become something else, something much more powerful.

(Strength +1, dexterity and constitution +3, 2000000) He took a breath to steady himself, his blade sharpened as I watched. He said this blade was mine. I said very well.

[This 2000000 award and the stat boost you get here and the one you can get shortly with Vhailor is their bonus. You don't get anything. By the way, you CAN level up while in combat.]

Annah

Then I woke Annah from eternal sleep. I told her that I'd found my mortality and he didn't like me much. I needed her help.

Her eyes took on a steely glint and she nodded, saying she was going to stand by me. I said let's do it, then.

Vhailor

Then it was Vhailor's turn. He took little of my power, but rose instantly. I called his name. He said he had awakened.

I told him that a great injustice had been done. When I died, someone else across the Planes died in my place. It had happened hundreds, thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands of times. The multiverse dies that I might live.

(Strength +3, dexterity and constitution +25, 2000000)

He swelled as I spoke, becoming greater, more a force than armor. I told him that I knew my crime and I was trying to prevent it from ever happening again,

but the one creature that could put an end to this injustice refuses to allow it for his own selfish reasons.

He said I was now among the condemned, as was this other. He would see both our souls split upon justice's blade.

I said very well, but I need to attend to the other one first. He said he would, and then he would return for me.

Nordom

I drew him back from ... where would such as he go when, if, he died? I told him I needed his help. I had found my killer and it was my mortality.

He said awaiting order. Good, old Nordom. I told him to get ready, he'd have a target for his crossbows soon enough.

As soon as I spoke my last to Nordom the Green Murderer appeared. No talking or tricking now, he was wrath incarnate ... but so was I.

As my companions ran for their equipment, I ran to slay. The Green One cast a shielding spell as I ran towards him. I held the Entropic Blade. I struck blow on blow, he cast spells. He threw some great, yellow demon at me, which brought yellow fire and laid it upon me. It hurt me grievously.

My companions had reached their equipment. All save Vhailor. He knew nothing but JUSTICE and came to slay the Green One. His axe struck slowly, but with each blow the Green Murderer gave the bellow of a dead god slain.

Nordom fired until his quivers were empty, while Morte sent in the skulls and threw insults for good measure.

Annah flew at the Green One in a fury, fists flying. Her blows were light, but each one pricked a soft spot upon the creature.

Dak'kon ... Dak'kon, no longer lost, ran silently to his target. His blade moved faster than eyes could see and everywhere the blade passed a new wound gaped.

More spells from the Green One, every one at me. I would have died many times had my powers not grown so. More blows from us. No more spells or magics ... no more tricks ... just anger and pain.

A last cry from the Green Murderer and he was gone. I looked up from the body to see Dak'kon pull his will from the corpse ...

Endings

It was done ... in a moment I was swallowed up in flames ... Ow, my head ... I blinked and looked about me. In the distance, I could see carnage and fighting. As I walked towards the conflict I saw a weapon, lodged between stones ...

Oh well. Another life, another body ...

[For those who have read this entire document, a deep thank you. For those at Stratos Group who made my work look so polished and professional, thank you for your support as I struggled through this.]

And to the people at Interplay and Black Isle, I salute you. I have never felt such emotion and involvement with the characters and plot of a game. I will freely admit that I shed tears at the end for Deionarra's devotion and the tragedy of the Paranoid Incarnation. Torment is the finest computer role-playing game I have



ever played. Thank you for creating a game I could still love after a hundred-thousand-plus words and I don't know how many hours.

Ed note: 132,000+ words...

I'd like to thank my sister Dorothy for always believing.

Finally, I'd like to thank Debby for her love, support and knowing when to grab the silly string.]